

Three Realms 231

Chapter 231: Heading Straight for the Dragonteeth Guard Headquarters

Tian Shao's emotions were highly agitated as he'd never thought that someone as calm and dependable as him would have such an impulsive moment.

He seemed to have regressed back to the days when he was a young boy, young and wild, blood boiling with enthusiasm.

The two of them headed straight for the Dragonteeth Guard headquarters.

Wasn't this kind of grand, hearty emotion the energy of youth that he'd lost for quite some time?

Tian Shao suddenly thought that it wouldn't be a waste of his life at all if he fell to Yang Zhao's hands like this.

Not too long after, both Jiang Chen and Tian Shao arrived in the air above the Guard's headquarters.

"Is the general director of the Dragonteeth Guard, Sir Shangguan Yi, in? Jiang Chen would like to pay his respects!"

Jiang Chen's voice rang out clearly and descended into the headquarters like a crack of thunder.

What?!

The headquarters instantly boiled over with activity.

Jiang Chen!

Yang Zhao and his confidantes in particular, happened to be taking attendance at the moment in preparation for storming the Jiang manor and capture everyone present in it.

Had Jiang Chen just come knocking on their doors before their army had had a chance to mobilize? And had he just pointed his finger specifically at the general director?

Had Jiang Chen eaten the heart of a bear or stolen courage from a leopard?

Yang Zhao's expression frosted over as he shot a cold glance at Xin Wudao who was standing with the third troop, and Qi Fengxian, general of the seventh troop. These two men were Yang Zhao's confidantes who he'd mentored and raised up through the ranks.

Xin Wudao immediately bowed, "Honored director, this Jiang Chen is courting death. Your subordinate will immediately personally lead the troops into capture this cretin alive and have him await your punishment."

"Your subordinate is willing to fight alongside Xin Wudao."

Yang Zhao was quite satisfied with their attitudes and nodded, his tone cruel and firm, "Take more men with you and make it fast. Don't waste time talking to him and arrest him first."

"Understood!"

Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian immediately began counting off their men. They'd selected twenty practitioners before long, who happened to all be half step spirit realm. Four of them were even first level spirit realm.

"Kill Jiang Chen, and take Tian Shao alive!" Xin Wudao's gaze raked the twenty practitioners. "Do you understand?"

"Yes!"

"Good. Follow me to kill Jiang Chen and obtain revenge for vice general Lu Wuji!"

"Kill Jiang Chen, revenge for vice general Lu!"

All of the practitioners leapt onto their Yellow Winged Lesser Dragons and shot into the sky, full of aggression and ferocity.

As generals, Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian rode even larger lesser dragons and led the charge, shooting into the skies.

Jiang Chen narrowed his eyes as he looked at Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian hurtling upwards with great killing intent.

"General director Shangguan, I've come to pay my respects as to try fair means before resorting to force. I've done so out of respect for your position and reputation as the general director of the Dragonteeth Guard. If you continue to turn a blind eye and allow these people to act as they will, then I will be forced to give offense today. Once things get out of hand and the situation is hard to salvage, don't blame me for not giving you face!"

Jiang Chen's tone was frightful as he grasped the Da Yu bow in his hand.

Out of the twenty approaching him, Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian were the strongest, but they were only approaching the second level and thus at the peak of first level spirit realm.

As for Jiang Chen, his level of strength had already been in the first level spirit realm before he set out for the maze realm. After the trials of the maze realm and his many fortuitous encounters, his training and battle strength had greatly increased. Although he had yet to break through to the second level, his level of battle strength was enough to exchange blows with someone at the third level spirit realm.

One had to know that when Jiang Chen had crossed paths with the Silvermoon Monsterape back in the maze realm, that spirit creature was equivalent to the earth spirit realm.

The earth spirit realm started off at the fourth level spirit realm!

The Da Yu bow was in his hands and an arrow notched to the bowstring.

Jiang Chen's heart was as still as the water as killing intent surged within it.

He had no fear even if he was in the headquarters of the Dragonteeth Guard, a dragon's lair or a tiger's cave.

His last warning had already been issued. If Shangguan Yi continued to turn a blind eye, that meant that he was silently approving of Yang Zhao's actions and was allowing Yang Zhao to act as he wished. This

also meant that Shangguan Yi had subtly placed himself on Yang Zhao's side and opposite that of the Crown Prince and Jiang Chen.

To put things simply, that meant he was the enemy!

Whether one was a friend or foe would be decided in the span of a moment.

Jiang Chen watched as the figures of the practitioners hurtling upwards grew bigger and bigger, becoming closer and closer, approaching his shooting range.

A Da Yu arrow was notched to the bowstring just like an arrow was notched to Jiang Chen's heart strings.

With just one thought, the Da Yu bow would shoot forth Jiang Chen's boundless killing intent towards these enemies.

Jiang Chen had decided that if this group of people approached his sphere of influence without any action from Shangguan Yi, then he would unleash a slaughter!

A hundred meters, fifty meters, thirty meters...

Jiang Chen's eyes narrowed slightly as his thoughts became more and more resolute. The desire to kill slowly spread over his face.

Tian Shao was both nervous and anxious. However, he also knew that now that things had developed to this point, it was already past the point of no return.

He knew that Jiang Chen was forcing Shangguan Yi to pick a side now, making him stand out to determine his attitude and see if he was friend or foe!

Tian Shao could also understand this. If Shangguan Yi's attitude continued to remain ambiguous, it would still affect the Crown Prince.

In the overall battle for his crown, the Crown Prince would be at a disadvantage if something like this continues.

Therefore, although Jiang Chen's actions seemed rash, they were actually highly sophisticated. He was forcing Shangguan Yi to publicly declare himself for one side.

Except, this tactic came with incredible risk as well.

Never had anyone had the guts to cause trouble at the headquarters of the Dragonteeth Guard in the entire history of the Skylaurel Kingdom.

Jiang Chen took a deep breath and sighed, "Brother Tian, it looks like your general director is really a bit disappointing. Since this is the case, there's no way that the matters of today can be resolved nicely. Let's do it!"

"Jiang Chen, you killed a vice general of my Guard and dared to saunter into my headquarters to jeer at us. You're courting death!"

“Today, the elites of my Guard will swear to uphold our honor and execute the enemy Jiang Chen to sate our anger!”

“Kill Jiang Chen and defend the Dragonteeth Guard’s unparalleled honor!”

“Kill!”

Battlecries shook the heavens as twenty practitioners under Xin Wudao and Qi Xianfeng’s leadership charged over Jiang Chen’s mentally marked line, thereby crossing over his bottom line.

Then die!

Countless killing thoughts flashed through Jiang Chen’s heart as he drew back on the Da Yu bow.

“Hold!”

A cry roared out at this critical moment like a crash of thunder on a sunny day. It shook the space between the heavens and earth and reverberated in countless echoes, making everyone’s eardrums thrum in response.

This voice was exceedingly powerful and caused even the wings of the Goldwing Swordbird beneath Jiang Chen to shudder uncontrollably, shivering all over.

The steeds of Xin Wudao and the others weren’t any better off. The eyes of their lesser dragons were filled with fear and respect as they hovered in midair, not daring to move at all.

“The general director, it’s the general director!” Tian Shao controlled the roiling blood in his chest with effort as joy blossomed on his face. The general director had arrived!

Jiang Chen was also slightly surprised. The powerful aura contained within the voice was less than that of only Ye Chonglou, out of all the people he knew.

Even Elder Iron of the Precious Tree Sect wasn’t stronger than the owner of this voice.

The owner of this voice was the general director of the Dragonteeth Guard?

Jiang Chen discovered that he had somewhat underestimated the Dragonteeth Guard. He hadn’t thought that the general director of the Dragonteeth Guard would have such strength.

The Skyl Laurel Kingdom was one of the four greatest amongst the sixteen kingdom alliance, with hidden dragons and crouching tigers abounded within the kingdom, and experts were as plentiful as the clouds.

Except, Jiang Chen’s Boulder’s Heart had been trained to an extreme, and thus his concentration only slightly wavered when faced with the aura of the general director without any further discomfort.

A lone figure drew an arc across the void.

A dapper, urbane middle-aged man broke through the skies on the back of a Gold Winged Lesser Dragon. There were a few strands of white in his sideburns as his eyes looked as deep as those of a dragon or lion’s. They added a few traces of gentility to his looks without detracting from his air of one in a superior position.

“Subordinate Tian Shao greets the general director!” The general director was a highly respected existence within the Dragonteeth Guard. Although Tian Shao’s situation was a bit awkward at the moment, the natural inclination of military men to follow their leaders spurred him to pay his respects at the first opportunity.

Xin Wudao and the others also reacted and paid their respects, “Your subordinate greets the general director.”

Shangguan Yi’s expression was remote as his eyes reflected the stars, with not a single hint of a fierce edge. He didn’t display any emotions as they swept over those assembled.

“Jiang Chen?” The general director’s gaze rested on Jiang Chen’s face.

Jiang Chen couldn’t identify any conflicts with the side that he’d picked based on the general director’s facial expression.

“Jiang Chen greets the general director.” Jiang Chen was neither cringing nor arrogant.

“Jiang Chen, I have heard of your name and know that you have some capabilities to back your words up. When a young man has such talent as you, why do you not retract some of your edge? With your talents, you would have an unbounded future in front of you if you restrained yourself a bit. Why vie for a moment’s pride?”

One had to say that the general director was still very gracious, but although his words seemed to be spoke in persuasion, it was also subtly taking him down a peg.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, “With the general director’s lofty position, you should be able to see that I’ve never purposefully displayed my edge since arriving in the Skyuarel Kingdom. It’s people like Lu Wuji who have continuously provoked me and wanted to condemn me to death, colluding with even outsiders in pursuit of this aim. My trip was to inquire how the Dragonteeth Guard would be able to tolerate such treason and heresy when they have been proven to have such authority and power? If even colluding with outside enemies and endangering the kingdom can go unpunished, and even continue to strut and flourish, then how will people view the Dragonteeth Guard? Will everyone in the kingdom feel that their highly esteemed Dragonteeth Guard is a place that takes in and hides such filth?”

Jiang Chen remained unafraid in front of the general director and spoke at ease. His words even pointed to the Dragonteeth Guard, saying that it was sheltering Yang Zhao and fostering villains!

Tian Shao also privately wiped away a handful of sweat when he heard these words. He was young master Chen alright, to be able to have such courage and insight when facing off with the general director.

These words were infused with a strong sense of righteousness and laid the truth out on the table, making it impossible for the general director to shy away.

If the general director dodged the question, then meant he was silently admitting to the Guard fostering villains and to admit that he, as the general director, was unable to take down a criminal of a vice general.

If the general director were to respond however, then he'd have to handle Yang Zhao!

One had to say that Jiang Chen was giving the general director quite a thorny problem with these words.

Chapter 232: Elder Iron Arrives

Shangguan Yi's eyes widened slightly as he realized that he'd underestimated Jiang Chen's verbal wits.

"Jiang Chen, who doesn't know how to speak empty words? Who doesn't know how to slander others? You say that Lu Wuji colluded with outside enemies, but do you have any evidence? As the vice general of the Guard, it was pure coincidence that Lu Wuji was patrolling there. Who would've thought that you were seized with crazy ideas and framed Lu Wuji, pinning the crime of consorting with the enemy onto him! Not only that, you even killed him to silence him! Why would you kill him if you didn't have a guilty conscience?"

Xin Wudao was the first to jump out.

"That's right! Killing someone to get rid of eyewitnesses is a sign of a guilty conscience! If vice general Lu had indeed been guilty, the Guard would've made our investigations. When had it become your right an outsider, to interfere in the internal affairs of our Guard? Not to mention that even if Lu Wuji was guilty, he should've had the opportunity to defend himself? You slaughtered the eyewitnesses to make sure that the dead won't talk and you could say whatever you wanted! You killed Lu Wuji first and then slandered vice director Yang. This is an unbridled provocation of the Guard. How will we pacify the fury of the million strong Dragonteeth Guard if we don't kill you today? How else will we defend our highest honor?!" Qi Fengxian also denounced Jiang Chen with utmost self righteousness.

Xin Wudao continued in the same vein and said to Shangguan Yi, "General director, this enemy has treated our Guard with contempt many times. He has even killed one of our generals and besmirched our good reputation. If he doesn't die, the prestige of the Guard will be wholly eradicated. Your subordinate cries tears of blood in request to do battle. I am willing to use my life to kill this enemy!"

"General director, your subordinate requests to do battle!" Qi Fengxian also cried out.

"Your subordinate requests to do battle!"

The other twenty practitioners also started shouting.

Each side had their own testimonies and continued to worsen the conflict. This actually caused some degree of anxiety for Shangguan Yi. This tit for tat was forcing him to take a side.

With how things stood, he'd become the greatest joke beneath the heavens if he just washed his hands of the entire matter.

However, it truly was hard to make a decision in this moment.

Give the order to execute Jiang Chen?

That would mean he was protecting Yang Zhao and thoroughly placing himself on the opposite side of the Crown Prince. He'd be hard pressed to explain himself to the king.

If he gave the order to thoroughly investigate, he'd definitely be offending the Precious Tree Sect! The king didn't want to see this situation develop either.

In the deepest part of his heart, Shangguan Yi did want to do away with some of Yang Zhao's power.

But he also knew that this was a difficult order to give. If he gave it, that meant he'd have to clean out Yang Zhao and his confederates, greatly harming morale within the Guard.

"General director, there is clear evidence that Lu Wuji colluded with enemies on the outside. The assassins of the Hidden Hand and the victim Xue Tong can all testify to this point." Tian Shao saw an opportunity and took it upon himself to start explaining without heed of the consequences.

Jiang Chen's look was unfathomable as he looked at Shangguan Yi, looked at this general director of the Dragonteeth Guard who held so much power in his hands. His expression was as though nothing was wrong, as if he felt no pressure in the air over the Dragonteeth Guard headquarters.

Just as Shangguan Yi was greatly torn, another chirping sound came from overhead as two beams of light streaked through the skies, shooting in from afar.

A female voice screamed shrilly in the air, "Who killed my nephew Lu Wuji?! Shangguan Yi, you're a general director and couldn't even protect one of your men! You might as well give up your position of general director!"

"Humph! As one of the all powerful forces within the Skylareland Kingdom, to think that the Dragonteeth Guard would be thrown for such a loop by a foreign kid! General director Shangguan Yi, you're not a very good boss, eh!"

Jiang Chen was rather familiar with the second voice. When he'd left the maze realm, the owner of this voice had once threatened Jiang Chen and said that he'd ban Jiang Chen, making it so that he'd never set foot into the Precious Tree Sect.

Jiang Chen sighed internally when he heard this voice. It looked like he couldn't avoid the inevitable.

The balanced situation had likely been broken in the second that these two had arrived. The latter's attitude was also very domineering, obviously not respecting Shangguan Yi's position at all.

Two figures flashed across the sky like lightning and hovered above Shangguan Yi.

One of them was wearing a blue robe and an incredibly dark facial expression. He was precisely the person who'd proclaimed, in front of the Precious Tree Sect mountain, that he would ban Jiang Chen.

The other female was incredibly stunning, but had a harsh demeanor. She was rather alluring and boasted of a luscious body. A natural charm flirted between her eyebrows.

She had a few traces of resemblance to Lu Wuji.

Jiang Chen guessed that this person was Yang Zhao's sister.

Lu Wuji's mother was Yang Zhao's elder sister, and this person was Yang Zhao's younger sister. In this regard, this person was Lu Wuji's younger sister and Lu Wuji's aunt.

The arrogance of power and constant indulgence was written all over this woman's face. She pointed at Jiang Chen and spoke with a cocky tone, "Dearest Iron, this brat is that dumb animal Jiang Chen?"

Elder Iron was quite familiar with Jiang Chen. As he thought of the matters of the maze realm on that day, the flames of hatred spat out from Elder Iron's eyes as a trace of a sinister smile played around his lips.

That expression was obviously saying that, brat, here you are in my hands!

"Xiaoqian, this dumb animal is bullying others because of his power and position. Don't you see? He's so bold as to come swaggering into the Dragonteeth Guard headquarters after killing one of their own. Our mighty general director doesn't even dare let loose with a fart. Tsk tsk tsk, general director, why don't you tell me just when did the banner of the Dragonteeth Guard become so tattered?"

Elder Iron and his wife began sparring with their tongues and lips as soon as they arrived. To reduce Shangguan Yi to this level, even if he were Buddha it would spark some anger in him.

Shangguan Yi's face froze, "Elder Iron, the Dragonteeth Guard will take care of our own matters. If I recall correctly, it's not the place of the senior executives to interfere with the internal matters of our Dragonteeth Guard, no?"

Elder Iron smirked proudly, "Shangguan, don't bullshit me. Lu Wuji is my woman's nephew. Your failure to protect him is evidence of your incompetence. Now, the killer is in front of you. I'll give you one chance. If you take him down, I'll pretend that all is the same."

This was a blatant threat.

He was ordering people about without the slightest hint of respect in his words or gestures, completing dismissing Shangguan Yi's status as general director.

The beautiful yet stern woman, Yang Zhao's sister Yang Xiaoqian, spoke with a darkened face, "Iron dear, what's the point in wasting words with this sort of trash? You're an elder of the Precious Tree Sect, isn't it the simplest thing to appoint and dismiss a general director of the Dragonteeth Guard? This Shangguan Yi is useless, why not remove him? I've never felt happy about him lording it over my brother. The Dragonteeth Guard is the premiere power within the Skylareland Kingdom, surely it can't be given over to a coward."

Elder Iron chuckled, "Xiaoqian, no rush, don't be in a hurry. This matter won't blow over that easily!"

Shangguan Yi was about to explode in his anger.

He'd seen his share of cocky people, but the couple in front of him was a first.

At the very minimum, he was a general director of the Dragonteeth Guard. In terms of martial dao prowess, at the very least, he wasn't weaker than Elder Iron. He could even be said to be a bit stronger.

However, this ridiculous couple had dared act so atrociously as to slap his face in public, bandying about words like, "incompetent" and "useless", and completely disregarding his identity.

“Elder Iron, I don’t know where your sense of superiority comes from, but my position was appointed by the king himself. I only have one superior, and that is His Majesty. Since when was an elder of the Precious Tree Sect able to have any say in the matters of mundane kingdoms?”

Shangguan Yi had indeed harbored thoughts of protecting Yang Zhao in the beginning, and he’d been thinking of how to pacify Elder Iron’s rage.

Who would’ve thought that his consideration would be met with a complete lack of understanding, and moreover replaced with humiliation, oppression, and public loss of face instead.

Their posturing was an obvious attempt to strip him of his power and position, giving it to Yang Zhao instead.

Shangguan Yi had plotted and schemed all his life, but discovered that he had still been too naive in the end.

The thoughts of those in a sect were completely different from courtiers. They didn’t care about balance nor the greater picture.

These people made use of the sect’s influence and name to act crudely and simply, cutting straight to the chase without exchanging niceties with him at all!

Elder Iron’s face darkened, “Shangguan Yi, don’t you scare me with talk of the king. The change of royal families in a mundane kingdom can occur with a single word from a sect, and you want to use the king to scare me? I’d like to know if even the king has the guts to threaten me!”

Yang Xiaoqiang called out, “Everyone of the Dragonteeth Guard, listen up! Shangguan Yi is incompetent and allowed one of your generals to be executed by an outsider. Now that the enemy is knocking on your doors, he doesn’t even dare let loose with a fart! How is someone like him suitable to be your boss?! Elder Iron from the Precious Tree Sect will be taking the reins of power now. Everyone listen to his orders and kill the enemy Jiang Chen, hereby wiping away previous humiliation and reasserting the power of the Dragonteeth Guard!”

Elder Iron whistled and continued, “I am an elder of the Precious Tree Sect and hereby announce in my name that I am temporarily taking care of the Dragonteeth Guard, appointing Yang Zhao as acting general director!”

Shangguan Yi’s expression changed drastically. He knew that those of the sect were domineering, but he hadn’t thought that they were overbearing enough to directly remove him from his position and take over the Guard!

“Elder Iron, you’re out of bounds and abusing your power!”

Elder Iron flashed a cold, proud smile. “And what can you do about that? You’re the master of the Dragonteeth Guard in their eyes, but a mere ant in the eyes of the Guard’s senior executives. Shangguan Yi, either you get the hell out now, or atone for your crimes by doing good deeds. I promise that as long as you capture Jiang Chen, I’ll still reserve a position of vice director for you!”

This was face slapping with no holds barred.

The position of general director was a lofty and powerful one. No one dared go against his wishes.

To promise a position of vice director was undoubtedly directly slapping his face, unadulterated suppression.

As good as Shangguan Yi's upbringing was, he also became incensed. "Elder Iron, if you're tyrannical to the point of interfering with the internal matters of my Dragonteeth Guard, I'm going to pursue this to the very end even if I have to take my lawsuit against you to the head of the Precious Tree Sect!"

"So much hot air." Elder Iron snorted coldly and looked at Xin Wudao and the others. "Why haven't you made your moves yet?"

Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian were overjoyed to see this development. Although they greatly respected and feared Shangguan Yi, with an elder of the Precious Tree Sect was backing them up, what could they possibly be afraid of?

Not to mention that the elder had already said he was going to make Yang Zhao general director. Shangguan Yi was already a thing of the past!

Chapter 233: Three Arrows to the Head, Slapping Elder Iron's Face

"Xin Wudao, Qi Fengxian, open your eyes and take a good look! The Dragontooth Emblem is here, no one moves without my order!"

At this point, Shangguan Yi was well and truly enraged and had erupted into open hostilities with Elder Iron. He knew that it was impossible to continue on amiable terms.

Even if he didn't want to stand on Jiang Chen's side, he had no other choice!

Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian looked at each other, hardening their hearts as a violent light gleamed in their eyes. They shouted, "Mister Shangguan, we dare not ignore the orders of a Precious Tree Sect elder. Our apologies for the offense!"

Xin Wudao made a hand gesture after they spoke and charged towards Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen had been watching everything silently with a cold smile on his face, constantly on his guard as he watched the situation develop. When he saw Xin Wudao and the others rapidly close in, the Da Yu bow in his hands spat forth merciless arrows that rained down like shooting stars, aiming straight for Xin Wudao and Qi Xianfeng who were leading the charge.

The power of these arrows encompassed the mysteries of Jiang Chen's strongest attacks, even combining the essence of the "Moonshatter Flying Daggers" within them.

They looked ordinary but surged with deadly intent.

Elder Iron had originally thought that, given Xin Wudao's numbers, it would be as easy as killing an ant to kill Jiang Chen.

But, suddenly —

Elder Iron's expression changed as he yelled, "There's something wrong about these arrows, retreat!"

Quicker than words could tell —

Xin Wudao and Qi Xianfeng had already rushed to the front by the time Elder Iron issued his warning, it was entirely too late to avoid the attacks.

Like meteors, the arrows seemed to flare brilliantly, traveling through the air in a bizarre trail and sinking deep into their targets where their light flared again.

Pfft pfft pfft.

Three arrows found their way to three heads.

The strong shattering force seemed to punch through the stars as three perfectly fine heads exploded, a sanguine rain decorating the air.

The heads of Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian, solid first level spirit realm practitioners, had exploded just like that!

Shangguan Yi hadn't anticipated that something like this would happen at all, and neither could Elder Iron.

With their intuition, they had sensed that Jiang Chen was but first level spirit realm, and not even second level spirit realm.

With that level of training, it would've been difficult to say who would've won if he'd gone into single combat against Xin Wudao.

In group battle, they didn't think that Jiang Chen would hold out beyond ten rounds.

However, the truth completely flabbergasted them.

Judging from Jiang Chen's posture, it was apparent that he wasn't viewing Xin Wudao as someone on his level at all. Jiang Chen was shooting out arrows one after another like he was at target practice, not feeling any pressure at all.

He'd slapped his Goldwing Swordbird and quickly backed up a few hundred meters, pointing the Da Yu bow in Elder Iron's direction.

The Goldwing Swordbird that Tian Shao was riding on had also moved accordingly, retreating behind Jiang Chen.

Bam, bam, bam!

Three headless corpses fell from the sky and crashed heavily onto the ground, smashing into three balls of meat paste. The Dragonteeth Guard, who were watching from below, all had their expressions drastically change as they jumped in fright.

Any of these three had a certain stature in the Guard!

Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian were heavyweights amongst the ten main generals of the Guard. Who would've thought they'd be taken out with a single headshot!

One hit K.O.!

As domineering and fierce as the Dragonteeth Guard normally was, they still felt goosebumps as they witnessed Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian's ghastly demise. They'd finally realized that Jiang Chen wasn't someone to be trifled with!

Everyone's previous understanding of Jiang Chen had halted at the level of rumors. But those rumors paled in comparison to the stark power behind the three arrows after they finally saw him in action

Shangguan Yi was also slightly startled. He had known that Jiang Chen was a genius and had talent, but hadn't thought that he would be so heaven defying on the road of martial training!

The outside world had thought all along that Jiang Chen was precocious and valued by Ye Chonglou because he knew a few unconventional methods.

Who would've thought that Jiang Chen wasn't as simple as knowing a few parlor tricks.

Whether it was the power of these three arrows or the martial dao potential embodied by them, even the proud Shangguan Yi had to admit that he was far inferior to Jiang Chen at that age!

"That this Jiang Chen would find favor in the old tutor's eyes, his reputation is well deserved! It looks like His Majesty and I have both overlooked Jiang Chen's martial dao potential and were completely befuddled by his unorthodox ways! Jiang Chen's martial dao potential is likely amongst the apex of the entire sixteen kingdoms!"

Shangguan Yi was actually overjoyed instead of angry. Jiang Chen's extraordinary martial dao potential further reinforced his desire to stand with the Crown Prince.

Shock was written all over Elder Iron's face as his eyes stared straight at Jiang Chen.

"Jiang Chen, you... you dared kill someone right in front of me?"

Elder Iron felt his face burn as if someone had slapped him. He given the order to the others to kill Jiang Chen, who would've thought that they would be killed in an instant by him instead!

"Iron dearest, this little whelp dares to kill someone right in front of you! He's someone who even gives no face to an elder of the Precious Tree Sect!" Yang Xiaoqian screamed shrilly as she added fuel to the fire.

Elder Iron spoke with a darkened face as he nodded slightly, staring at Shangguan Yi. "Shangguan Yi, you're a coward alright. These men are all your troops and you stood idly by while they were killed in front of you. It looks like the Dragonteeth Guard needs to be thoroughly purged."

Shangguan Yi said faintly, "Elder Iron, Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian both called me Mister Shangguan just now. As such, they'd both already betrayed the Dragonteeth Guard and were no longer my troops. It is just and right that a traitor should die."

"Shangguan Yi, it looks like you still refuse to realize your errors. Good, very good! Since you've hardened your heart to protect an outside enemy, it looks like I have to take matters into my own hands."

Elder Iron's gaze was cruel as he looked at Shangguan Yi. "If you dare interfere, that means you're making an enemy of the entire Precious Tree Sect. Once the senior executives of my Sect are enraged, even the king himself won't be able to suffer their wrath, not to mention a mere you!"

"Shangguan Yi, do you dare fight against the Precious Tree Sect? Do you really want to die that badly?" Yang Xiaoqian also started to make her threats.

"My Iron dearest is the son of one of the four esteemed elders, and is on the same level as the sect head. Insulting him means making an enemy of the entire sect. I'm rather curious, even the royal family doesn't dare offend the sect. You're just a lackey of the royal family, where are you getting the courage to be enemies with my dear Iron?"

Shangguan Yi's heart clenched.

He knew full well that Elder Iron was speaking the truth. Even the king wouldn't publicly make an enemy of Elder Iron like this.

If Elder Iron wanted to blow this matter up and involve his father, then things would really be dire.

Elder Iron's father was one of the people with the most power within the Precious Tree Sect.

He was the head of the four esteemed elders, and his status second to only that of Xie Tianshu, the head of the Precious Tree Sect.

As the second most important personage within the sect, any of his random stomps would be enough to make the entire kingdom shudder. If he became truly enraged, the consequences would be beyond imagination.

Such a character was someone that even the royal family couldn't afford to offend.

Shangguan Yi's expression was ugly as he looked at Jiang Chen, sighing inwardly. "How would Jiang Chen not rise from the masses with his potential?"

If he hadn't been targeted by Elder Iron and hadn't offended Yang Zhao, he would surely alight the clouds in the future and possess a boundless future.

It was a pity that a genius' personality was much too direct and was one that couldn't bear to hide his edge, attracting a fatal disaster for him in the end.

Shangguan Yi was of a mind to protect a wonderful talent in this moment, but after weighing up the situation, he also knew that protecting Jiang Chen now would be placing himself thoroughly opposite Elder Iron.

If it was just a simple Elder Iron, he was confident that he could handle him.

However, not even all the nobles and those of power within the Skylare Kingdom combined would be able to withstand the rage of Yang Zhao father's rage.

"Jiang Chen, it's not that I don't want to do anything, but that the circumstances are forcing me to do thus." Shangguan Yi sighed lightly in his heart but said to Jiang Chen, "Jiang Chen, you're on your own."

After saying these words, he too moved to the side with a darkened expression.

He could only choose to remain neutral in this moment. It was a decision out of resignation, and one that he must take.

Elder Iron knew that Shangguan Yi was still afraid of the power of the Precious Tree Sect at the end of the day. He was enormously proud inside and kept laughing coldly.

“Seems like you can at least recognize what’s in front of you.” Yang Xiaoqian also displayed a mocking expression on her face.

There was no one else between Jiang Chen and Elder Iron after Shangguan Yi had stepped aside.

“Jiang Chen, aren’t you arrogant? Aren’t you cocky one?” Elder Iron started laughing hideously and spurred his mount on to approach Jiang Chen, “And how will you be cocky now?”

Elder Iron had currently trained to the sixth level spirit realm. He only needed to take a single step to set foot into the seventh level and become a true expert within the spirit realm. Although his level of training didn’t count as the highest within the sect, it was still that of an extremely rare existence.

With his father’s power, he had inexhaustible resources. Assailing the sky spirit realm was only a matter of time.

With his training of sixth level spirit realm, taking care of a young man was easily said and done.

A violent light dawned in Yang Xiaoqian’s eyes as she cried out, “Iron dearest, take him alive! This dumb animal killed Wuji, we can’t let him die that easily!”

Elder Iron chuckled, “Don’t worry, this brat talked back to me several times already. He won’t have the luxury of dying a swift death!”

Tian Shao’s body couldn’t help but tremble when he felt Elder Iron’s aura approach.

This wasn’t internal fear or horror, but the disparity between the capability of his level of training and the aura of a peak earth spirit realm practitioner. This was uncontrollable!

Even Jiang Chen, having trained the Boulder’s Heart, felt that there was a force like a mountain roiling towards him.

Except, Jiang Chen remained as unshaken as a mountain, his gaze steady and not being controlled by Elder Iron’s aura in the slightest.

“You with the Iron surname, I’ve long since heard that your position as a Precious Tree Sect elder was a result of your old man’s power. It looks like the rumors are true! A noble sect elder is stooping so low as to bully the weak and throw his weight around in a mundane kingdom to oppress the younger generation?”

A faint voice abruptly traveled through the air. This voice held a few traces of sarcasm, as if a beam of sunlight cleaved through a sky covered with storm clouds.

The storm clouds were abruptly illuminated in that moment.

These words seemed to be imbued with boundless destruction as it washed away Elder Iron’s aura, and vanished without a trace.

Shangguan Yi was the first to react, crying out involuntarily with joy, "Honored tutor Ye, it's honored tutor Ye!"

Tian Shao also abruptly came to his senses and was overjoyed. "Honored tutor Ye has come!"

Elder Iron had been in the middle of his stride, going about with great pride and momentum, and viewing Jiang Chen as fish paste on a cutting board, able to be smacked at leisure. To think that someone would just appear at this moment, and Ye Chonglou at that!

If there was one person in this entire mundane kingdom that Elder Iron feared, then this person would be Ye Chonglou, the mysterious and unpredictable spirit king protector of the kingdom!

Chapter 234: Ye Chonglou's Strong Attitude

Ye Chonglou walked slowly out of thin air with his graying hair, billowing sleeves, and riding his trademark Five Winged Lesser Dragon.

He didn't seem to have any particular attitude even when facing an elder of the Precious Tree Sect. His expression was noncommittal, as if he didn't care in the slightest.

"Shangguan Yi greets the noble tutor!" Shangguan Yi hastened to come forward and perform a bow.

"Tian Shao greets the noble tutor!"

Jiang Chen also smiled faintly to see Ye Chonglou appear out of thin air and walked up, "Lordmaster, it seems that I'll owe you a favor again this time."

"Haha you devious boy. When it comes down to it, it is I who owes you a favor. Otherwise, the problems with this Lesser Dragon would've made me worry to death."

Ye Chonglou laughed heartily as he looked at Jiang Chen with a meaningful look. The old tutor had actually arrived a long time ago, but hadn't made an appearance because he wanted to see how Jiang Chen would handle this matter.

He'd discovered to his surprise that Jiang Chen didn't have the slightest inclination to run even when faced with Elder Iron's oppressive aura!

Even the old tutor couldn't quite figure out just what was giving Jiang Chen so much confidence. What other trump cards did he have up his sleeve?

Although it'd looked extremely easily for him to shoot Xin Wudao and the other first level spirit realm practitioners dead with Jiang Chen's level of training, the levels between different martial dao training were clearly defined. It was absolutely impossible for him to make a stand against Elder Iron at the sixth level spirit realm.

Even the Da Yu bow would be unable to threaten a practitioner at the peak of the earth spirit realm!

This was a difference in foundational strength that would be unable to be bridged with just mere tricks.

As strong as one's martial dao potential was and as domineering the mysteries of one's martial techniques possibly were, all was as empty as the floating winds in the face of an absolute power gap.

It wasn't impossible for one to challenge someone a level higher, nor was it not allowed.

But there was a limit to such challenges. Overreaching a level or two was possible, but challenging upwards a difference of four to five levels was the daydreams of an idiot.

Did Jiang Chen possibly not know that the difference in strength between him and Elder Iron, was something that tricks wouldn't be able to compensate for?

Or was it that Jiang Chen, with his extraordinary sensitivity, had long since guessed that Ye Chonglou would appear?

The old tutor was quite confident that with his level of training, not even Elder Iron would be able to discover him hiding in the shadows, much less than Jiang Chen who was at the first level spirit realm. Therefore, there was no way that the latter would've discovered him.

"If he had only guessed that I would come, then Jiang Chen's confidence and absence of fear in the face of danger, his courage and charisma is enough for him to look down on all his peers." The old tutor sighed with emotion in his heart. Regardless of what reason it had been, it was already a miracle that someone of the first level spirit realm could maintain his own heart and will, and also not flee when faced with the strong aura of a earth spirit realm practitioner!

A sense of humiliation surged to the fore when Elder Iron saw that Ye Chonglou had inserted himself into the matter and was laughing and talking with Jiang Chen, completely ignoring him, an elder of the Precious Tree Sect.

He controlled the flames of anger in his heart with effort and said faintly, "Lordmaster, today's matter is a private grudge between me and Jiang Chen. Are you trying to interfere?"

"Private grudge?" Ye Chonglou smiled a small smile. "Lu Wuji colluded with outside enemies and invited disaster into the capital. Jiang Chen killed him out of consideration for the capital's security and was implementing justice. The Precious Tree Sect is a patron of the Skylaurel Kingdom and should be lauding Jiang Chen's righteous act, so what kind of private grudge can arise here? Could it be that Elder Iron is still seething over what happened after the Autumn Hunt and is making use of this opportunity to seek revenge?"

That was an obvious given.

Elder Iron flew into a rage when he heard these words, "Implementing justice? Bullshit! Lu Wuji is my wife's nephew and thus he has to call me uncle when it comes down to it. He was killed without reason by Jiang Chen and you tell me that I don't have the right to even ask about it?! Lordmaster Ye, I've always respected you and didn't want to start anything with you. If you want to intervene in even my familial affairs, that means you're putting yourself down as an enemy of my Iron family and one of the entire Precious Tree Sect!"

"Don't you use your sect to try to bully me. Others may fear your old man, this pile of old bones doesn't!" Ye Chonglou rolled his eyes. "You want to bullshit with me and talk about family ties, fine. Jiang Chen is my savior and I quite admire him, to the point that I view him as a nephew. Your nephew committed a crime and was executed for it, that was his just desserts. If you're up in arms about this, then come at me. I'll take whatever you have the ability to send my way!"

The lordmaster's words were neither spoken in a great rush nor with a raised voice. He didn't put on a menacing expression or speak with an overbearing manner. However, his attitude was clearly defined as he expressed to Elder Iron that Jiang Chen was someone he valued, and anyone who wishes to lay a finger on Jiang Chen would have to go through him first!

When he voiced these words, even Shangguan Yi who was watching by the side was greatly astonished, not to mention Elder Iron. The former knew that the honored tutor thought highly of Jiang Chen, greatly valued and admired Jiang Chen, but he'd never thought that the honored tutor was willing to erupt in open hostilities with Elder Iron over Jiang Chen, to the extent that he would even verbally warn the elder.

The honored tutor hadn't been moved at all when Elder Iron had brought out his heavyweight of a father.

How was this just normal admiration?

This was basically the attitude towards one's own son!

If it hadn't been for Jiang Chen's background being thoroughly investigated, Shangguan Yi almost suspected that Jiang Chen was the honored tutor's bastard son.

Tian Shao was even more flabbergasted! He'd never thought that a lofty noble Tutor Ye, at the existence of a god, would be willing to offend a heavyweight of the Precious Tree Sect for a foreign youth!

One had to know that even the Crown Prince wouldn't have the fortune to receive such treatment!

The entire Dragonteeth Guard descended into mass speechlessness in that moment.

They suddenly understood that Lu Wuji's death had been in vain.

How would they obtain revenge when Ye Chonglou was backing Jiang Chen up? So what if vice director Yang was making a stand? So what if Elder Iron was doing so as well?

Hadn't everyone seen that even Elder Iron's old man had had no effect?

Those Guards who'd been swayed and wanted to betray Shangguan Yi began to hesitate.

Could vice director Yang really win out over Jiang Chen?

If it'd been before the honored tutor had appeared, no one within the Guard would've believed that Jiang Chen would win.

In their eyes, as much furor that Jiang Chen could kick up, he was just a locust of late autumn, destined not to live long!

However, the events that had then taken place had caused the situation to take a hundred and eighty degree turn.

The honored tutor was willing to insult even the esteemed elder of the Precious Tree Sect to personally protect Jiang Chen and emphasize that he viewed Jiang Chen like a nephew!

The weight of these words changed everything.

Anyone who wanted to form any grudge with Jiang Chen would have to thoroughly consider if they could hold up beneath the honored tutor's rage on the basis of these words alone.

Even vice director Yang may not have the courage to be enemies with the honored tutor!

The Precious Tree Sect was strong and a titan, but it still didn't have many ties with the mundane world. Ye Chonglou however, was the legend of the kingdom who had been revered for generations, a living legend and undying monument!

Such a character was the Skylaurel Kingdom's god!

How many would take the long way around when passing by the spirit king protector's manor for fear of bumping into him, not to mention become enemies with him or run afoul of his taboos?

"Lu Wuji that idiot, of all people to provoke, he had to pick Jiang Chen."

"Ai, Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian were also kicked in the brains when they were young. They dared to publicly rebel against the general director in order to accomplish some achievements, but this resulted in their heads being taken off. Well deserved, well deserved! It looks like there will be a massive house cleaning after this matter. With so many empty positions, it seems that there will be many chances for us!"

The internal of the Dragonteeth Guard had a subtle change of heart in the span of a second.

Those who'd looked like they were on Yang Zhao's side all involuntarily took their place by Shangguan Yi again.

They were heaving inward sighs of relief that they hadn't been impulsive just now and hadn't stood out to express their stances or been in a hurry to curry favor. Otherwise, the general director would be sure to take them to task after this matter!

Elder Iron's words were all forcefully stopped in his mouth. His face turned red with his effort in holding things in as he was greatly enraged but didn't dare erupt.

If his strength allowed him to do so, with his personality, he wouldn't mind beating the old tutor to death.

However, he didn't dare do so and didn't have this strength either.

He was well aware that this mysterious old man's reputation as the spirit king protector wasn't the result of bluffing. Even his father couldn't quite define Ye Chonglou and felt that they should avoid offending him if possible.

Elder Iron didn't feel that he had what it would take to go head to head with someone whom even his father feared.

However, if he backed down just like this, he wouldn't be able to swallow this hit to his pride as a Precious Tree Sect elder!

"Lordmaster Ye, why is this? I've also investigated this kid and he's just a savage bumpkin from the Eastern Kingdom. He has no impressive background or any awe inspiring abilities, he just has a bit of

uncommon potential. Our Skylareal Kingdom has young men like this by the dozen. If you like youth like these, I'll select eight or ten from the Sect and send them to your manor. Give me Jiang Chen and I will owe you a favor. My father will also admit to this favor!"

Elder Iron was someone who could bow and rise at will. When he saw that taking a tough attitude wouldn't get him anywhere, he decided to try a softer tactic.

Yang Xiaoqian also wept, "Lordmaster, as many faults that my nephew had, he shouldn't be beaten to death just like that. This Jiang Chen is so rampantly unbridled and yet you protect this foreign tyrant. What are we of the Skylareal Kingdom to make of this?"

This woman knew how to put on a good act alright. She could cry at the drop of a hat and put on quite a convincing act.

However, her actions were like those of a clown in front of the lordmaster.

The lordmaster smiled faintly, "Elder Iron, I don't want eight or ten of anyone else. I admire Jiang Chen. Even thousands or tens of thousands of others would be unable to replace him. If you want to keep discussing, then leave now and I will let bygones be bygones. They can settle their grudge between themselves. As long as you older generation doesn't intervene, I promise I won't as well. If you want to use your power and influence to force your hand, then my apologies, although I am quite old, I have truly never been crushed by anyone before."

As for Yang Xiaoqian's fake sobbing, the lordmaster couldn't even be bothered to give a response.

Elder Iron fully erupted into a rage when he saw that the lordmaster wasn't giving him any face at all. "Tutor Ye, does this mean that you've hardened your heart to protect this kid?"

"You can take it that way if you want to." Tutor Ye's tone was noncommittal.

"Good, good, good! Jiang Chen, you listen up! You have a strong backer today. I don't believe that you'll always be able to hide behind your backer and never be caught out!"

Elder Iron's tone was vicious as he continued, "You'd best pray for yourself that you don't end up in my hands. Otherwise, I'll make it so that you can't live even if you pray to live, and that you can't die even though you wish to die."

His eyebrow then flicked as he looked at Ye Chonglou. "Tutor Ye, you're the one who said that you won't interfere if we don't. They will take care of this themselves. Do you stand by your words?"

"Of course."

"Good, then you won't suppress Yang Zhao either, right?"

"I have no interest in mundane battles." The honored tutor said faintly.

"Good, very good! Since this is the case, then let's have Yang Zhao and this brat fight it out and see who falls to the other. If you break your word and interfere, then my Precious Tree Sect will never stand for this!"

The honored tutor smiled slightly and wasn't even interested in responding to threats.

It was Jiang Chen however, who had a hint of a meaningful smile appear on his lips.

The honored tutor couldn't help but ponder when he saw that smile. With his knowledge of Jiang Chen, that smile meant that something was about to happen!

Chapter 235: Yang Zhao is Dead?

The honored tutor couldn't help but sigh internally when he saw Elder Iron jeer and taunt in that manner. It was such a shame that the Precious Tree Sect had such an elder like him.

That a vaunted senior executive of a sect would lose his composure this way in a mundane kingdom and lose so much face to a young man, Elder Iron was quite a unique character alright.

In comparison, Jiang Chen had remained the same throughout in maintaining his cool composure.

Elder Iron looked like he was wasting his years of experience in contrast.

When Elder Iron noticed Jiang Chen's noncommittal posture, directionless rage surged in his heart. The calmer Jiang Chen was, the greater of a provocation that appeared in Elder Iron's eyes.

You're just a brat who still reeks of your mother's milk. What right do you have to act like you're above others in front of me?

Elder Iron stared viciously at Jiang Chen, "Jiang Chen, don't you think you can relax after escaping today. Yang Zhao isn't Lu Wuji!"

Yang Xiaoqian also bit off her words, "My brother won't let you off the hook for killing my nephew! Jiang Chen, you best pray that you don't end up in our hands! We'll have you begging for death but denying you mercy!"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "Yang Zhao? I hope he has the chance to do so in his next life."

"What did you say?" Elder Iron's eyes narrowed into slits.

Yang Xiaoqian started laughing coldly, "Have you gone crazy that you actually want to fight my brother? You want to go against a spirit realm expert with just that bit of training? Don't you think..."

A figure shot up from below before Yang Xiaoqian had a chance to finish her words.

The person was the third director of the Dragonteeth Guard, Qi Tiannan. Panic was written all over his face, as if the sky was caving in and like he'd seen a ghost.

He hurriedly walked up to Shangguan Yi, "General director, something has gone terribly wrong. Vice director Yang, he... he..."

Shangguan Yi's face grew frosty. "What has he done now?"

His first thought was that Yang Zhao had rebelled against the Dragonteeth Guard.

Qi Tiannan's expression was like he's seen a ghost. "He's... he's dead, and he died a gruesome death at that!"

"What?!"

Elder Iron and Yang Xiaoqian's faces abruptly changed drastically.

Elder Iron was even more agitated as he shot over and clutched Qi Tiannan's chest, screaming out of control with a wild expression, "What did you say? What did you just say?! Say that again!"

With Elder Iron holding him with a death grip, it was a given that Qi Tiannan was unable to move even a muscle.

Yang Xiaoqian also squirmed over as anxiety was written all over her beautiful face. "What did you just say? What happened to my brother?"

Qi Tiannan had a wry expression written all over his face. His teeth were almost chattering as he looked at Elder Iron and Yang Xiaoqian's vicious expressions. He was afraid that Elder Iron would beat him to death for speaking the slightest wrong word.

Shangguan Yi snorted, "Elder Iron, let go of vice director Qi before you ask your questions. Your behavior is unfitting of your status!"

Elder Iron's tone and expression was ugly as he roared, "Shangguan Yi, shut your blathering mouth! If anything has happened to Yang Zhao, you're also an accomplice!"

Shangguan Yi had finally snapped; he could no longer tolerate this unreasonable fellow any longer. "Elder Iron, I could only endure in silence when you threw your weight around arrogantly because you have a much bigger backer than me. But if you're going to slander and frame me, you'll find that I, Shangguan Yi, am not a pig or a dog for you to slaughter so freely!"

"What, do you want to rebel against me?" A cruel light dawned in Elder Iron's eyes.

Shangguan Yi wasn't afraid in the slightest, "Elder Iron, all things have their limits, don't drive others too hard."

Elder Iron was about to really erupt when Yang Xiaoqian glanced at Ye Chonglou and saw that he was hinting Shangguan Yi to not be impulsive.

"Iron dear, let go of him first. Let's decide what to do after we get some answers."

Elder Iron snorted and loosened his grasp, shouting, "Just what happened? Describe everything in detail and don't leave out a single crucial bit!"

Qi Tiannan's face was ashen as he stammered and spoke slowly, "This was what happened. Vice director Yang came to the headquarters this morning and summoned a few generals for a private conversation. Anyways, the generals came out but the vice director stayed within the secret room. He said he wanted some time to himself and think about some things. But then both Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian were killed, causing a large disturbance. Some of the men were in a hurry to report in, but the vice director wouldn't open the door no matter how they knocked. Finally, a vice general worked up the courage to open the door and discovered..."

"Discovered what?" Yang Xiaoqian's voice was a bit panicked.

"We discovered that the vice director was lying in a pool of blood. It looked like something had nibbled all over his body and his face was destroyed. Apart from the head, almost everywhere else was nibbled

down to the bones. We could only identify him through his head, his clothing, and some personal items...”

“How is that possible?” Yang Xiaoqian’s expression changed drastically. She covered her ears with both hands as she cried out hoarsely, “This is impossible! My brother is a earth spirit realm practitioner. Exactly who in the Skylareland Kingdom would be able to kill him? You must’ve been mistaken!”

Elder Iron also shook his head. “Right, you must be mistaken. Xiaoqian, come, we’ll go take a look ourselves!”

He turned back and glared viciously at Jiang Chen, “Jiang Chen, you’ll be the enemy of my Iron family if you’re behind this! We won’t be able to live under the same sky and this will never be resolved unless one side dies!”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly as he was completely unmoved by Elder Iron’s threats. This elder had long since had a bone deep hatred of him, even without Yang Zhao’s matter.

Shangguan Yi didn’t know whether to be happy or sad when he suddenly heard this news.

Generally speaking, Yang Zhao’s confederates would naturally flee in all directions with his death and become a pile of scattered sand from henceforth. This great power within the Dragontooth Guard would be thoroughly dissolved, just like this.

This was definitely a good matter for Shangguan Yi as it meant that he had exterminated this tumor without expending a single soldier.

This was the good aspect.

It would naturally be followed by a bad aspect.

With Elder Iron’s expression, Shangguan Yi knew that if Yang Zhao was truly dead, then with Elder Iron’s personality, he would naturally vent out his feelings on Shangguan Yi.

He would then have Elder Iron as an enemy for the rest of his life.

“Forget it, Elder Iron would’ve transferred his anger on me regardless, no matter what role I played in this matter. I have a clear conscience. Even if his family’s influence is able cover the sky with one hand, he can’t suppress me for no reason. Besides, his family doesn’t own the Precious Tree Sect!”

“Old Qi, let’s take a look as well.”

Shangguan Yi summoned Qi Tiannan. Now that Yang Zhao was dead, the internal hierarchy of the Guard would be reformed. He’d still have to make sure that Qi Tiannan was on his side.

Qi Tiannan also shot him a grateful glance. The former had truly been afraid that Elder Iron would slap him to death in his anger just now.

It was a good thing that the general director had stepped forward and resolved the matter for him.

Shangguan Yi cupped his fists towards Ye Chonglou, “Noble tutor, I will express my apologies later to you for making you watch such a farce together with me..”

Ye Chonglou only responded faintly, “Shangguan, you’re the general director of the Dragonteeth Guard and this power has been bestowed upon you by the kingdom. You just need to be yourself and have the bearing of a general director. Why look ahead into the future or back into the past? You’d before afraid of the wolves in front of you and tigers behind you. The more you consider, the more you want to keep matters in balance, the less you wish to offend anyone, the more you will offend in the end as you fail to please both sides.”

Shangguan Yi started. The noble tutor was obviously not just casually saying these words. He patently wanted to give Shangguan Yi some advice and enlighten him.

As Shangguan Yi reflected, hadn’t his previous attitude been a wishy washy one of wanting to please both sides?

This was much easier said than done.

And now, Jiang Chen may not think all that favorably of him, and he’d thoroughly offended Elder Iron.

With a bitter taste in his mouth, Shangguan Yi sighed lightly and responded fervently, “My deepest appreciation to the noble tutor’s advice. I was indeed thinking too much before.”

He then cupped his hands at Jiang Chen, “Jiang Chen, although I didn’t protect you just now, I still look greatly favorably upon your potential. I have no right to give you any pointers with the honored tutor guiding your way, I just hope that you take some care.”

Jiang Chen didn’t blame Shangguan Yi. As the general director of the Guard, he had no relationship with Jiang Chen. From the perspective of relations, it was natural for him to lean towards Yang Zhao and fear Elder Iron.

Smiling faintly, Jiang Chen also cupped his hands in return. “General director, the honored tutor’s words are worthy of deep contemplation. I rather think that the general director would be well served by thoroughly considering them.”

“I am ashamed.” Shangguan Yi looked at Tian Shao again. “Tian Shao, not bad, not bad at all. In terms of responsibility and charisma at least, you put me to shame.”

Tian Shao grew fearful and hastily said, “The general director is noble and lofty, with each move and gesture affecting many. I’m just a small general and have no other choices available to me.”

Indeed, Shangguan Yi was different from Tian Shao.

Tian Shao could openly declare his allegiance and stand on Jiang Chen’s side because he was Ye Rong’s confidante and on the same boat as Jiang Chen.

If Yang Zhao rose to power, then Tian Shao wouldn’t even have a resting place for his corpse.

As a result he, chose Jiang Chen because he had had no other choices.

Shangguan Yi was different. As the general director, he had to consider the greater picture. However, he was vaguely regretful at this moment because he felt that he’d tried to balance too much and pleased neither party in the end.

Ye Chonglou chuckled when Shangguan Yi and the others left, "Jiang Chen, you kid, I feel that I can see through less and less of you."

The old tutor's intuition had been quite strong. He'd deduced that something was about to happen when he saw the hint of Jiang Chen's smile just now.

However, he never would've thought that such a huge matter would occur!

Yang Zhao had died without any movement or sound at all, completely without reason. There had been no foreshadowing at all. No one even knew when or how he died!

The most important thing was, although anyone could suspect Jiang Chen, there were no evidence to accuse Jiang Chen with.

This was because Jiang Chen had been in the air above the headquarters during the time that Yang Zhao had died. With so many pairs of eyes watching him, there was no way he could've slipped away no matter how strong he was

Besides, with Jiang Chen's level of training, no one would believe that he'd be able to kill the earth spirit realm practitioner Yang Zhao!

However, if it wasn't Jiang Chen, how did Yang Zhao die?

Speculations abounded, but Ye Chonglou wasn't the sort to pursue something to the very end. When he saw Jiang Chen's noncommittal demeanor, the old tutor knew better than anyone else that Jiang Chen's secrets were much more than those that he'd revealed.

Even the old tutor couldn't help but be deeply curious about a young man like this. This young man had assaulted the old tutor's jaded heart time and time again.

The old tutor had seen countless people in his life and witnessed innumerable so-called geniuses, but none of them had given him the feeling of being unable to define them.

The only one was Jiang Chen!

Chapter 236: Must Repair Relations with Jiang Chen

The scene within Yang Zhao's secret chamber was too ghastly to look at. Yang Xiaoqian's heart ripped in two as she gnashed her teeth before crying out crazily, "Jiang Chen, Jiang Chen! I'll have your clan annihilated!"

"Iron dear, you must take action on my behalf! I only have one elder brother and one nephew, and they both died because of Jiang Chen! In the end, my brother was a vice director of the Dragonteeth Guard and your, a Precious Tree Sect elder's, brother-in-law. Tell me, are you just going to watch over his death like this?"

Elder Iron's face turned ashen as all sorts of tests verified that this was indeed Yang Zhao's corpse, and that he had died a grisly death.

"Xiaoqian, that dumb animal Jiang Chen will die for sure! However, look at this injury, it couldn't have been created by an ordinary person. It looks like a monster chewed on him, and not just one at that."

“Monster?”

Yang Xiaoqian’s face drained of color, “Dearest Iron, what kind of monster is horrifying enough for even a earth spirit realm practitioner to be unable to fight back?”

Elder Iron’s expression was grave as he shook his head, a trace of fear emerging on his face as well.

“Xiaoqian, we’re going back to the sect. This Skylareland Kingdom is damned bizarre as hell.” Elder Iron broke out in cold sweat as his scalp tingled and chills ran down his spine..

His training was at the sixth level spirit realm, more than twice stronger than Yang Zhao’s fourth level spirit realm.

However, sixth level spirit realm was still just within the earth spirit realm at the end.

For Yang Zhao to die such a grisly death, even though Elder Iron was at the peak of the earth spirit realm, he was unsure whether he’d be able to escape unscathed in the same situation.

Although Elder Iron was arrogant and considered everyone beneath his notice, that was all built on the foundation of his mighty father.

And now that he was away from sect territory, he was beyond his father’s protection.

If there really was a monster lurking in the surroundings, then his life was in grave danger.

As cocky as Elder Iron was, he still valued his life quite a lot.

“Iron dear, we’re going back just like that? My brother died a pointless death just like this?” Yang Xiaoqian was sobbing up a storm as her tears flowed.

“Bring his corpse back for my father to take a look.” Elder Iron was unsure what to make of this scene after inspecting it for a while.

He wanted to find any excuse possible to hurry back to the sect.

At this point, Shangguan Yi had also brought a large number of people to the door of the secret room.

Yang Xiaoqian was filled with rage when she saw Shangguan Yi. Finally having found an outlet for her suppressed anger, she lunged forth, ranting and raving.

“Shangguan Yi, this is all your fault. My brother’s dead, are you happy now?! No one can threaten your position now, is it?! You can sleep soundly at night, huh?!”

Yang Xiaoqian was a madwoman. “Don’t you get cocky! My brother’s death won’t be in vain! If it turns out that you have anything to do with this, you’ll go down with him!”

Shangguan Yi’s face grew cold, “Ms. Yang, I understand your anguish caused by your brother’s death. But forget it if you wish to make a big deal out of this. If I really wanted Yang Zhao dead, why would I go through all this trouble? The crimes I have on hand are enough to put him to death. I had lengthy discussions with the king and suppressed so much evidence because I wanted to give Yang Zhao another chance. I can tell you clearly that his death had nothing to do with the Dragonteeth Guard!”

“Stop crying fake tears and pretending to be the good guy!”

Yang Xiaoqian however, was completely beyond reason. "If you're really that much of a good guy, why didn't you apprehend Jiang Chen just now?"

"Jiang Chen is the Crown Prince's confidante and the honored tutor's person. Can he be apprehended just like that? Not to mention that His Majesty wants balance and not to lean towards any particular side."

Elder Iron was enraged, "Shangguan Yi, stop bullshitting me with this crap. I'll tell you here and now that today's matters are not over yet!"

Shangguan Yi didn't hold out for hope of resolution when he saw that these two were completely unreasonable. He smiled faintly, "I have a clear conscience. Think whatever you'd like to think."

After Ye Chonglou's words, Shangguan Yi had thought things through as well. He knew that if he tried to please both sides, he'd end up pleasing neither.

Since Elder Iron was completely unable to be reasoned with, Shangguan Yi was naturally leaning towards Jiang Chen.

Elder Iron laughed coldly and carried away Yang Zhao's corpse, sweeping a frosty glance over Shangguan Yi. "Shangguan Yi, I hope you can remain on your position as a general director with ease!"

Shangguan Yi replied noncommittally, "The position of general director was authorized by the king himself. If the king thinks I am unfit, then why would I continue sitting in it?"

The connotations of his words were that it'd be up to the king to impeach him, and not the intervention of an elder overstepping his boundaries.

Elder Iron was naturally even more enraged when he saw Shangguan Yi was having nothing of his act.

However, he was in no mood to tarry at the moment. He left in a great huff, putting Shangguan Yi on his mental blacklist as well.

Shangguan Yi's face sank after Elder Iron left, "Summon all the generals and vice generals, I have an announcement to make."

Qi Tiannan shook all over as he looked at Shangguan Yi's frosty demeanor. He knew that the general director was truly incensed this time and had made up his mind to clean house.

Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian had publicly disobeyed Shangguan Yi earlier. This made the latter fully realize that he wasn't an infallible general director on high after all.

Two generals had dared openly defy him!

Even with an elder of the Precious Tree Sect mucking about in the middle, this was still absolutely intolerable in Shangguan Yi's eyes.

The Dragonteeth Guard was the Guard. Regardless of position or reason, obeying the commands of the general director was their natural duty.

They would be unfit to be in the Dragonteeth Guard if they lost sight of this commandment.

Indeed, Shangguan Yi put aside his usually amiable attitude once everyone was gathered and used methods as devastating as a thunderstrike to thoroughly clean out all of Yang Zhao's influence, removing all men he'd appointed.

From general, down to commander, and even captain, all who were associated with Yang Zhao were removed!

First vice director Zhou Kai was naturally in wholehearted support of these actions.

Qi Tiannan also deeply understand the importance of standing with the general director after this matter. He too, supported these motions.

Of the four directors, Yang Zhao was already dead and the two vice directors were both in support of Shangguan Yi. Everything was naturally carried out in a single swipe, meeting not the slightest bit of obstruction.

"General Director, Yang Zhao brought disaster upon the Dragonteeth Guard and caused our moral and reputation to suffer greatly. The general director should increase his control in the future and forge the Guard into one solid whole!"

Zhou Kai gave the following suggestion.

Shangguan Yi nodded, "Old Zhou, it was my oversight in trusting Yang Zhao too much before. You and Old Qi need to keep a closer eye on things for me in the future. As talented as people like Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian were, they still cannot serve my Guard."

People that would openly defy the Dragontooth Emblem like that would never enter the Guard again.

"Those were all Yang Zhao's confidantes. In their eyes, Yang Zhao's words were the divine decree." Zhou Kai had more than your average hatred for Yang Zhao.

Qi Tiannan also added, "There's nothing that our Guard cannot overcome if we are of one heart."

"Old Qi, you've gone through a hard time today." Shangguan Yi sighed.

A wave of gratitude welled up in Qi Tiannan's heart. At the end of the day, the general director had helped him out when Elder Iron had held him in his grasp earlier.

Qi Tiannan had more or less formed a distaste for Elder Iron and Yang Zhao after being humiliated by the former, and so his heart too leaned towards the general director.

"Don't you worry, I, Shangguan Yi, am also not an easy target. The Precious Tree Sect doesn't belong to the Iron family."

Morale through the Dragonteeth Guard was rather low at the moment. After all, Elder Iron's domineering performance had thoroughly robbed them of their face today.

Even Shangguan Yi as the general director had lost quite some face.

"General director, I feel that we should make use of the opportunity to repair our relations with Jiang Chen." Zhou Kai finally said.

If it'd been before, he absolutely would've been jeered by Yang Zhao had he proposed such an idea.

But now, Shangguan Yi had to seriously consider this suggestion.

It wasn't that the Dragonteeth Guard hadn't interacted with Jiang Chen before. When Lu Wuji had thrown Jiang Chen into the Black Dungeon last time, he'd caused a great trouble and had caused the four sites to flare in open hostility with the Guard.

Shangguan Yi had known about Jiang Chen since that time but hadn't paid him much heed. He'd only felt that Jiang Chen knew some tricks and had some decent relations with the four great sites, was all.

When he heard that the honored tutor had held Jiang Chen in high regard during his birthday banquet, he'd once again laughed, feeling that Jiang Chen knew some tricks to amuse the honored tutor.

But after the Autumn Hunt, Ye Rong had been the one to emerge from all the Crown Prince candidates, thanks to Jiang Chen and Dan Fei accompanying his entourage.

This was when Shangguan Yi had truly began seeing Jiang Chen's worth!

He knew very well that with Ye Rong's foundations, the only reason he could've emerged from the harsh competition within the maze realm was Jiang Chen.

Although he wasn't too sure what had happened in the maze realm, Jiang Chen had truly entered his line of sight since then and even the king himself sought to understand Jiang Chen better.

And in the current matter of Yang Zhao and Lu Wuji colluding with outside enemies to make a preemptive strike, who would've thought that the final result would be the two of them losing their lives in the end?

Elder Iron had slipped away himself as well, whereas Jiang Chen wasn't missing even a single strand of hair on his head!

All these things added together made it impossible for it to be just a coincidence.

If Jiang Chen was only an ordinary youth, where would he gain the courage to directly kill Lu Wuji?

If he was just a young genius, where would he scrounge up the courage to face Elder Iron's aura without turning tail to run?

If he was as simple as he appeared, why would the usually reclusive honored tutor personally make a trip to publicly defend him, even at the cost of offending the Iron family?

If there was nothing special about him, then how would one explain Yang Zhao's death? Was it really as Elder Iron had said, that a monster had been present?

Even if there was a monster, why had it targeted Yang Zhao alone, leaving the others untouched?

All sorts of questions forced Shangguan Yi to reevaluate Jiang Chen, and to reconsider his understanding on the causes and effects of all these matters.

There was only one conclusion —

This Jiang Chen was something, alright!

Chapter 237: Iron Father and Son, Secrets of the Sixteen Kingdoms

An elder with a slightly thickening waist examined at the corpse on the ground with a furrowed brow, remaining silent for a long while.

This person was Elder Iron's father, one of the four esteemed elders of the Precious Tree Sect, Iron Long.

"Father, say something!" Elder Iron became a bit anxious when he saw his father's continued silence.

"Iron Can, this person is your brother-in-law?" Iron Long asked.

"Yes, why else would I bring his corpse back for you to look over if he wasn't Xiaoqian's brother?" Elder Iron's full name was Iron Can.

"This person wasn't killed by a human. What killed him should've been a spirit creature, and a very bloodthirsty one at that." Iron Long sighed. "And, look, Yang Zhao didn't have the ability to fight back at all when he was devoured. When did such a strong spirit creature appear in the Skylareland Kingdom?"

"Who knows?" Iron Can was quite dispirited. "Father, do you think this spirit creature is strong? How strong is it?"

Iron Long's ire rose. "I didn't see it for myself, how would I know how strong it is? Since Yang Zhao was an earth spirit realm practitioner and couldn't fight back at all, then it must be much stronger than Yang Zhao. Iron Can, why were you so bored as to make a trip to a mundane kingdom instead of training? Do the ordinary affairs of the mundane world hold that much attraction for you?"

Iron Can had lost some face after this lecture from his father. "Something had happened to Xiaoqian's brother, so I had no choice either. Who doesn't know that Yang Zhao is my brother in law? If I didn't put in an appearance after something happened to him, people would laugh at me! Everyone would think that I'm a coward, that I couldn't protect my own brother-in-law. I can lose face, but you're a heavyweight of the Precious Tree Sect, so I can't let you lose face."

Iron Long snorted, "You're always full of random crap. I warned you, you should act decisively and swiftly if you make a move. Don't always go about creating trouble for me."

"I wanted to do that, but I was almost killed by someone else."

"What?" At the end of the day, Iron Long was still someone who sided with his son. He couldn't help but ask further when he heard Iron Can's words.

"Who else is there? That old fart Ye Chonglou! Pretending that he's all that because of his seniority, he's ruined my plans twice already! Father, wouldn't you say that this old man is like a stone in the latrine pit, smelly and stubborn? He actually dared erupt into open hostilities with me this time over an ordinary youth. He didn't give me the slightest bit of face when I brought up your name. Can it be that you, a vaunted esteemed elder of the Precious Tree Sect, doesn't measure up to a mundane old fart like him? This is truly infuriating. I'm truly incensed when I think of this matter!"

"Ye Chonglou?" Iron Long's brow faintly creased when he heard this name.

"Father, this old man Ye doesn't give you the slightest bit of face."

Iron Long's face sank slightly as he heard this name again. "With his seniority, why would he make trouble for you?"

"It's because of that Eastern Kingdom brat called Jiang Chen! I don't know what he's fed the old man, but the old man defended him this time at the cost of making enemies out of our house. Father, he's a mundane wandering practitioner. How is he a match for our sect?"

Iron Can's choice of words and the meanings held within were all designed to enrage his father and rouse his ire.

Nevertheless, Iron Long had the benefit of his years and wouldn't easily be led astray by his son's words. Besides, he also knew what kind of personality his son had.

"It isn't that the sect isn't a match for him, but that Ye Chonglou hasn't ever made trouble for the sect. It can even be said that he has a cooperative relationship with the sect, but he's never been willing to enter the sect. Otherwise the position of esteemed elder within the sect may not even be your old man's!"

Iron Long was still a bit fearful when he spoke of Ye Chonglou.

"Father, you're simply being too self deprecating and putting others on a pedestal!" Iron Can was completely unwilling to accept this. Ye Chonglou had been so cocky that he really wanted his father to put in an appearance and ruthlessly take the old man down a peg.

"Iron Can, you can plot against anyone you want, but avoid offending Ye Chonglou if you can. It's not that your father is afraid of him, but that there's no need to make such a strong enemy. If he really becomes our enemy and lodges a complaint against us with the sect head, our Iron family will be undoubtedly crushed by the sect head."

Where there were people, there would be conflict.

Where there was conflict, there would be struggles and fights.

Although the Precious Tree Sect was a hidden sect, it was unavoidable that struggles between factions would arise.

Iron Long was the head of the Iron family and sect head Xie Tianshu was the head of the Xie family. They were unequivocally the two large powers within the Precious Tree Sect.

Iron Can was rather depressed when he heard his father's words, "This means that we have to just lie down and take this?"

"What business do you have holding a grudge against Ye Chonglou? With his level, there's no point in you bearing ill feelings towards him. Even I don't wish to fight him, don't you think you're being ludicrous? Would you have come back so easily if he really wanted to suppress you?"

Iron Long started lecturing, "Remember, don't be a fool. You can't afford to offend Ye Chonglou. If you really offend the old man, he won't think of giving even your father face if he wants to move against you."

Iron Can was dumbfounded, "No way? He won't give face to even you, father?"

“You idiot!” Iron Long said ill temperedly. “He didn’t even give face to Xie Tianshu in the beginning. Xie Tianshu invited him to join the sect and offered many incentives and benefits. The old man turned him down.”

Iron Can was stunned. Was something wrong with Ye Chonglou’s brain?

He’d even turned down an invitation from the head of the Precious Tree Sect?!

Could it be that the attraction from a mundane kingdom was stronger than that from a sect?

“Father, just what’s with this Ye Chonglou? What reason does he have to turn down our sect?”

Iron Long laughed wryly, “You’re asking me? Exactly who should I go ask then? Regardless, him not joining the sect is good for us. Just make sure not to offend him in the future.”

“Then Yang Zhao’s death is in vain?” Iron Can was unwilling to accept this.

“What does Yang Zhao’s death have to do with Ye Chonglou? You don’t understand the old man. If he really wanted to destroy Yang Zhao, a single slap would’ve been enough to do the deed.”

“Even if it has nothing to do with Ye Chonglou, it definitely has something to do with Jiang Chen! Can I not antagonize Jiang Chen simply because Ye Chonglou is protecting him?”

“Can’t you use your brain for once? As long as he stays within the Skylaurel Kingdom, Jiang Chen will bump into our sect sooner or later. Then, there will be plenty of opportunities to suppress and take down Jiang Chen. Not to mention, even now you only need to find the right excuse to take care of Jiang Chen. Ye Chonglou isn’t related to Jiang Chen and he won’t be able to say anything then.”

“Heh heh, father is definitely the wisest. I’ve heard that Ye Chonglou wanted to take Jiang Chen as a disciple, but Jiang Chen didn’t agree. Isn’t this Jiang Chen just as weird as that old fart?”

‘What? You say that brat turned down the old man’s offer? Hahaha, what goes around comes around! He rejected the Precious Tree Sect, and someone else rejected him as well. Such is karma!” Iron Long also started laughing.

“Humph. Jiang Chen must’ve turned down that old fart because he wanted to enter the sect. I’ll have plenty of chances to take care of him if he wants to enter the sect!”

Iron Long nodded. “You’ve finally seen the light. The four great sects will be holding the selection of the geniuses soon. The scale of this year’s selection will be quite impressive as it’s the once in every sixty years.”

“Once every sixty years?”

“Yes, since they wish to unearth all the geniuses within the sixteen kingdoms, the level of this year’s selection is quite high. Iron Can, if you have the spare effort and time to kick up a fuss in the mundane world, why don’t you spend more time on finding young geniuses? Don’t think that you’re set for life just because you were born into the sect and were made an elder because of my influence.”

Iron Long really wanted to fling a stern slap over his son’s face when he saw his nonchalant attitude towards the situation.

He had to say, this son was a source of some disappointment to him.

However, as disappointed as he was, Iron Can was still his son.

“Iron Can, do you think that your life is wonderful as an elder of the sect? Are you satisfied that you can summon the winds and rain and walk around with abandon in the mundane kingdoms? Do you have no further goals in this life?”

“Father, I’m trying quite hard as well!”

“Trying hard?” Iron Long laughed coldly. “You try hard everyday between the legs of women, aren’t you?”

“Um...” Iron Can was quite depressed. “Father, I don’t understand. My performance isn’t that bad, is it? I haven’t lost face for you, have I? Why do you always demand that I do this or that?”

“Ai, Iron Can, there are some things I haven’t told you because I didn’t want you to worry. It’s right if you think that our Iron family has incredibly power and strength within the sect, but what you don’t know is that even our sect is not without any worries. This world is vast, and there are many practitioners out there. Although our sect is at the pinnacle of existence within the sixteen kingdoms, we’re only a small backwater in the greater picture of things.”

“Father, you simply think too much! Even if we’re a small backwater, we’ve lived quite well and peacefully these past couple hundred of years. What, can we not live just because we’re a small place?”

Iron Long’s irritation grew when he saw his son’s completely indifferent mentality, completely exasperated at his offspring’s failure to live up to his expectations.

“You hopeless good-for-nothing, there’s no hope for you!” Iron Long was so angry that his face was purple. He huffed, “I haven’t told you many things because they’re classified. Since you are content to muddle along in ignorance, I’ll tell you then!”

“What is it?” Iron Can’s thoughts raced when he saw how serious his father’s tone was. He didn’t dare treat things lightly anymore.

“Why do you think the selection this time is so important?”

“Why?” Iron Can really didn’t know.

“Why do you think that the four great sects, factions that have always been at odds with each other, would set aside their differences and combine efforts to identify the geniuses of the kingdom?”

“Father, stop asking me the questions and just tell me why? Please speak straightforwardly!”

“The reason is simple, because our sixteen kingdom alliance has been left far behind in the dust. Our existence has become lower and lower in this world. Our own kind is about to give up on us and we’re about to be downgraded to the level of desolate wilderness.”

“What does that mean? Father, what does it mean that our own kind is about to give up on us and we’ll be downgraded to desolate wilderness?”

“What does it mean?” Iron Long revealed a trace of a bleak and ghastly smile. “The region that we live in is called the Myriad Domain and is considered to be human territory. There are multiple factions in it. There are strong empires and enduring dynasties within it, as well as alliances of weak kingdoms such as us. Our sixteen kingdom alliance is amongst the weakest and smallest amongst all the factions in the Myriad Domain. But whether we’re strong or weak, we all belong to the human faction within the Myriad Domain and have received its protection. But if our alliance continues to weaken and cannot meet the Myriad Domain’s requirements, we’ll be naturally abandoned and lose the Domain’s protection. In this regard, our sixteen kingdom alliance will be thoroughly discarded by the powers within the human faction and become a land of desolate wilderness!”

“A land of desolate wilderness? What does that mean?”

“That means humanity have given up and exiled us. Once our land is labeled as desolate wilderness, that means the humans that live here won’t be under the protection of the human faction. At that point, we will become the target of attacks from alien races!”

Chapter 238: The Goldbiter Rat King’s First Taste of Sweetness

To be abandoned by the humans, to lack all protection, to be nibbled away by alien races and become their food!

Although it was only a hypothesis, it still made Iron Can shudder in fear. He could hear his father’s worry from his tone.

“Father, surely our sixteen kingdoms can’t be in that bad of a situation?” Iron Can managed to squeeze out an ugly smile.

“We’re worse off than you can think! Not a single one of our practitioners have broken through from the spirit realm in all these years. Those who’ve gone on to the original realm are all old monsters who did so hundreds of years ago. Of the sixteen kingdoms, only the four great sects can each boast of one original realm practitioner!”

A venerated original realm practitioner!

This was the existence of legends to Iron Can.

He had once heard that the Precious Tree Sect had an original realm ancestor as well, but as to what this ancestor looked like and where he was, Iron Can had never cared about that.

He’d felt that this was too far away from him and he had no need to pay attention to matters like these.

“Father, a venerated original realm practitioner is the stuff of legends. Do the other factions in the Myriad Domain have more original realm practitioners than us?”

Iron Long laughed ruefully, “More? How does more even begin to sum it up? Iron Can, you have an unlimited future ahead of you in the Precious Tree Sect because you have me as your father. However, my level of training would only net me an ordinary mid to senior executive position within the powerful empires and dynasties of the Myriad Domain. I wouldn’t even make it into the core power. These powerful forces and great sects have dozens of original realm practitioners, possibly even more!”

“What?”

Iron Can was thoroughly shocked to hear these words.

The entire Precious Tree Sect had less than ten practitioners in the sky spirit realm, much less the original realm. They only had one in the original realm, and he was just a figure in a far away fairy tale.

“Stop losing your composure over this. My estimate is also likely quite conservative. These original realm practitioners are also divided into the minor, earth, and sky original realm, much like the spirit realm. The original practitioners of our four sects are only of the first and second levels, making them of the minor levels as well. To these great sects and powerful parties, a minor original realm is nothing at all. Those within the heart of their core power are all of the sky original realm!”

Iron Can was thoroughly flabbergasted. His sense of superiority seemed to have been stripped away from him instantly; he was completely shell shocked.

A frog at the bottom of the well?

A complete frog at the bottom of the well!

.....

Yang Zhao's death and the news of the Dragonteeth Guard cleaning house quickly made the rounds in the capital.

Firstly, with respect to the conflict between Yang Zhao and the Crown Prince, as well as the various grudges between Lu Wuji and Jiang Chen, it had all quickly become public knowledge within the capital beforehand.

The nobles, courtiers, and officials within the capital had all held the mentality of watching a good show as they had kept an eye on the struggle between the Crown Prince and vice director of the Dragonteeth Guard.

People hadn't held high hopes for the Crown Prince originally. After all, Yang Zhao had a sect elder behind him that even Shangguan Yi would give him some respect for! Ye Rong was a Crown Prince who'd just received his title. His foundations were shaky, his background not substantial enough, what would he bring out to contend against Yang Zhao?

It was said that Jiang Chen was the Crown Prince's right hand man and had killed Lu Wuji.

However, those of the capital still veered on not looking too favorably on the Crown Prince.

Jiang Chen?

Although the courtiers and officials recognized that Jiang Chen had some ability to him, but to think that a foreign child would use his power alone to fight against Yang Zhao and the sect elder behind him was simply too ludicrous!

However —

Everyone found it hard to believe the developments that had come to pass.

Jiang Chen had singlehandedly rushed into the Dragonteeth Guard headquarters and used his strength alone to kill Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian, two of Yang Zhao's confidantes, right in front Shangguan Yi and Elder Iron!

He'd been completely without fear even when Elder Iron himself oppressed him after that.

Even more astonishing was that the honored tutor, someone who usually disdained from involving himself with the matters of the world, had protected Jiang Chen at the cost of offending Elder Iron!

The most confounding of them all was that the vice director had died randomly within a secret chamber!

These astounding scenes happened one after another; it was truly a series of unfortunate events.

The entire matter had proceeded in a direction that no one could've anticipated at all.

Yang Zhao, someone who held tremendous power within the Dragonteeth Guard, had bizarrely died just like that!

His confederates, who'd always liked lording it and running roughshod over others, had either been killed or demoted and thoroughly swept out of the guard.

Even the overweeningly arrogant Elder Iron hadn't wrung any concessions out of Jiang Chen and returned to the sect with a face full of dust.

It was only then that everyone realized how laughably they'd underestimated Jiang Chen before.

But of course, people couldn't be faulted for looking down on Jiang Chen.

After all, he'd kept a low profile since arriving in the Skylaurel Kingdom and hadn't raised a great fanfare.

He'd kept his first clash with Lu Wuji confined within a small space, so news of that hadn't spread.

Although he had shone in the spotlight during the honored tutor's birthday banquet, but many had felt that he had just been lucky and knew some tricks to amuse the honored tutor.

Even though there had been many points of doubt during the trials within the maze realm, but there was no direct evidence that proved how awesome Jiang Chen was.

It wasn't that they didn't suspect Jiang Chen, but as nobles of the Skylaurel Kingdom, everyone was consciously avoiding this topic.

After all, how could it be an easy thing for a foreign kid to receive the true acceptance of the Skylaurel Kingdom?

However —

With how things had developed, everyone within the Skylaurel Kingdom had to admit that they were witnessing Jiang Chen's rise and that they had underestimated him before!

If people had had any doubts regarding Jiang Chen's strength before, then the three arrows that had killed Xin Wudao and Qi Fengxian had thoroughly helped everyone understand — Jiang Chen's martial dao potential was higher than that of any of his peers!

The entire Jiang manor was celebrating riotously.

When they listened to Tian Shao describe what had happened, Jiang Chen's personal guards were all filled with fervent ardor and pride beyond belief.

Venturing into the dragon's cave alone, he had exterminated their enemies in the heart of the Dragonteeth Guard's headquarters!

The Precious Tree Sect elder had arrived with imposing momentum, but had gotten nothing but a face full of dust for his troubles!

Yet, through all this, Jiang Chen was rather indifferent.

Whether it was Xin Wudao or Qi Fengxian, they were just a few small pawns. So he'd killed them. Jiang Chen didn't think it was much of anything.

As for Yang Zhao, that was naturally the work of the Goldbiter Rat king.

Within the secret chamber, the Goldbiter Rat King was on his back and belching loudly.

"Ole King, enjoyed yourself this time, didn't you? You look like you've taken in a lot of nutrition after swallowing two earth spirit realm practitioners!"

The Rat King chuckled. He'd had his first taste of sweetness since leaving the maze realm.

His Goldbiter Rat tribe had to scurry to and fro for hiding places within the maze realm, to say nothing of trying to actually hunt other spirit creatures.

He'd discovered that there were actually quite a few spirit realm practitioners to devour in the outside world!

These spirit realm practitioners were enormously nutritious, and there were so many of them!

The assassin Xue San from the Hidden Hand and Yang Zhao had been particularly rich supplements.

Jiang Chen knew that the Rat King must have been feeling damn good when he saw the Rat King chuckle deviously.

"However, keep in mind that although there are opportunities to devour spirit realm practitioners, they aren't that numerous either. They're also of limited effect when it comes to evolving bloodlines."

These words mentioned the crux of the problem.

"Young master Chen, your words are quite right. Although devouring spirit realm practitioners have great benefits for training, it has no particular use for evolving bloodlines."

Although the Rat King was quite satisfied with his recent meals, the true reason why he'd ventured into the outside world with Jiang Chen occupied every moment of his thoughts.

To evolve bloodlines, improve the bloodlines of his tribe, and trace their source up to that of the Ancient Goldbiter Kingrats!

That was the ultimate goal and why he'd left his homeland with his tribe!

“Ole King, there are many ways to evolve bloodlines.”

“Tell me about it.”

“The first is to naturally awaken your heritage of memories and use the secret arts contained within to complete the evolution of your bloodlines. This method is the most useful, but certain opportunities are needed to provoke the awakening of memories. I know a few ways to provoke this awakening, but I can’t train in those methods for now due to the level of my training. There’s no way to practice the secret arts of the soul without entering the original realm.”

The Rat King nodded his head. Although he didn’t know of any secret arts, Jiang Chen’s words made sense. Awakening the heritage of memories was indeed the most ideal way to evolve bloodlines.

“The second secret art is to make use of heaven defying spirit medicines to forcefully remake your bodies and encourage the evolution of bloodlines. Fortuitous encounters are also needed to use these methods, and the type of heaven defying spirit medicine needed are all heavenly treasures that can be found only once in a hundred years.”

“As for the third method, it’s similar to the second method. There are many wondrous locations filled with spirit qi in this world. If you enter any one of them, you can use the spirit qi inside to remake your bodies and complete the evolution of bloodlines. These spirit qi places are incredibly rare.”

“There are also a few other ways, but they’re even rarer. However, the evolution of bloodlines only needs to succeed in one of your children. As long as one succeeds, then all its descendents will see their bloodlines change as well. Although theirs won’t be as pure as the original, but the overall quality of your bloodlines will greatly increase.”

The Rat King widened his eyes as he looked at Jiang Chen, his eyes filled with admiration.

“Young master Chen, you... you understand this much? It looks like you really haven’t lied to me.” The Rat King was completely hero worshipping Jiang Chen at this point.

“No shit. When did I ever lie to you?” Jiang Chen was a bit depressed.

“Heh heh, as long as young master Chen hasn’t lied to me, I, ole King, will be your assistant in the future. I’ll destroy whoever you tell me to destroy!”

Jiang Chen laughed, “Don’t think I don’t know your schemes. You also eat well when you’re my assistant!”

The Rat King chuckled wickedly, “Of course I should benefit from being your assistant. Oh right, young master Chen, I feel that your martial dao training defies the heavens as well, and it’s only a matter of time before you enter the original realm. You must practice those secret arts of the soul then and help us awaken our heritage.”

“That’s the promise between us, of course I won’t forget.”

“Alright!” The Rat King was quite satisfied and also spoke a reminder, “Young master Chen, you’ve absorbed the essence of the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice. You should hurry and develop it. I can sense that once you make the essence your own, it will absolutely become one of your trump cards!”

Chapter 239: Breakthrough, Second Level Spirit Realm!

The Rat King's words were precisely what Jiang Chen was most preoccupied with as well.

Ever since leaving the maze realm, the focus of Jiang Chen's martial dao training had been in this area.

Even when ranked against other greater entities, the Lotus was still at a very lofty level of existence.

He'd never thought that he would encounter something as heaven-defying as this within the maze realm.

Not only had he encountered it, but he'd also made it his own!

One had to know that the true core of the Lotus was the Flaming Heart of Ice.

After Jiang Chen had taken the Heart, it meant that he'd received the essence of the Heart. This was the equivalent of planting a Lotus blossom within his spirit ocean that belonged solely to him!

One had to know that the Lotus would be able to transmute into spirit as soon as it fully awakened. Once it transmuted into spirit, it wouldn't have to stay in one place anymore.

Perhaps it was Jiang Chen's luck that he had met the Lotus when it was in an infantile state. Since it hadn't fully awakened, it was in a drowsy, half awake state

If it'd been a fully awakened Lotus, its intelligence would be incredibly astonishing, and its powers of manipulation would be at a frightening level. At the very least, It'd be a saint rank spirit entity .

The saint rank was the equivalent of an original realm human practitioner, whether in terms of spirit creatures, plant spirits, or other races.

If it could evolve to the true saint rank, then it would be even stronger than a human original realm practitioner.

The Lotus was a spirit entity that had extraordinary powers of evolution, even when compared to all others beneath the heavens.

There were even Lotuses that were at the earth, sky, and divine ranks beneath the heavens, much less than a true saint rank.

Jiang Chen had to admit that his luck had been beyond his imagination this time.

It was just like the Rat King had said, once he thoroughly refined the Lotus and made it his, it would become one of his terrifying aces.

This was also one of Jiang Chen's fortuitous encounters. If it'd been any other practitioner who'd tried absorbing the Heart, the Heart would've surely turned against the practitioner and the practitioner would have exploded on the spot.

As for Jiang Chen, his spirit ocean had been shaped and elevated by the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill. The spirit ocean within his body was perfectly balanced and the five elements were in absolute harmony.

All of his peers within the sixteen kingdoms didn't possess these conditions.

Their spirit oceans were on a completely different level from Jiang Chen.

It was because of the strength and the high tolerance of Jiang Chen's spirit ocean that he had been able to absorb and assimilate the Heart that embodied both attributes of ice and fire.

Of course, the process wasn't easy.

If Jiang Chen hadn't mastered the mysteries of the "Divine Aeons Fist", he likely wouldn't have so easily absorbed the Heart into his spirit ocean.

All sorts of fortunate encounters seemed to have been predestined for this to happen.

If anything had gone wrong at any step, Jiang Chen would've narrowly missed the Lotus.

However, absorbing the Heart was one thing, exploiting it was another thing entirely.

The quality of the Heart was too high and it would impose great demands on the spirit energy stores within Jiang Chen's spirit ocean in order to deploy the techniques within it.

It would be exceedingly difficult to thoroughly deploy the Heart's complete might without sufficient spirit energy.

"It looks like I need to strengthen my training and continue cleaving open my spirit ocean, raising the level of my training."

With Jiang Chen's current level at the first level spirit realm, it was virtually impossible for him to fully utilize the Heart.

He could, at most, manipulate two Lotuses right now, a far cry from the Lotus that was in the maze realm.

Although the Lotus in the maze realm hadn't fully awakened, it could already manipulate up to a hundred vines.

The strength of its power had been such that even a spirit rank creature like the Rat King had had reservations.

This was why the Rat King had continuously prodded Jiang Chen to exploit the Heart. He was also in awe of that level of strength.

Since the Rat King was hanging around Jiang Chen, he naturally wished Jiang Chen to be as strong as possible. The stronger Jiang Chen was, the faster he would become stronger and the greater the likelihood that he would be able to help their bloodlines evolve.

In addition, the Lotus had a particular natural gift, and that was to absorb its prey's spirit power and use it for itself.

The more prey it had, the more spirit power it could absorb and the faster its level of training would rise.

Jiang Chen circulated his spirit ocean within the secret room, holding the moon in one hand and the sun in the other, sending out two beams of spirit energy directly into the ground.

The ground of the secret room suddenly quaked slightly as two Lotus vines broke through the earth.

These two Lotus vines were the limits of Jiang Chen's current manipulation abilities.

When manipulating these two vines, it was apparent that he was quite a ways off from the Lotus itself, whether in terms of vine thickness or sufficiency of spirit energy.

The vines continued to thicken as they swayed. One was like a blossoming flame, and the other was as if a lotus in the snowy mountains. Both of them interwove and radiated off of each other, appearing both bizarre and awe inspiring.

The Rat King circled the vines a few times, tsking in amazement. "Not bad, not bad. Young master Chen is a martial dao genius alright. To think that you would've grasped the mysteries of the Bewitching Lotus of Ice and Fire and can really manipulate them. If you weren't confined by your current level of training, I'd say that the Lotus in your hands could absolutely challenge the sky spirit realm!"

The sky spirit realm was seventh level spirit realm at the least!

As a spirit rank creature, the Rat King was the equivalent of a sky spirit realm practitioner. It was at the peak of existence within the spirit rank and was almost at the peak of the rank.

To be at the peak of the spirit rank meant the peak of the human spirit realm, which was a spirit king protector like Ye Chonglou!

Those who could receive such a title was almost the equivalent of half step original realm.

Of course, with the Rat King's own level of strength, he wasn't necessarily at Ye Chonglou's level. But even if he was unable to win in a fight against Ye Chonglou, when combined with his fiendish ways of tunneling through the earth, several Ye Chonglous wouldn't necessarily be able to handle him!

Jiang Chen didn't treat the Rat King's fawning words seriously.

With his current level of training, only an idiot would dare dream to contend against a practitioner in the sky spirit realm.

If he could manipulate more than ten vines at a time, then he would possibly have a chance.

Of course, in order to manipulate more than ten vines at a time, his spirit ocean wouldn't just be at the first level spirit realm.

His spirit ocean would have to at least reach third level spirit realm, or even the earth spirit realm.

"I've obtained so many spirit ingredients in the maze realm. It's time to select some and extract their essence for my use."

Jiang Chen had been so keen on spirit ingredients in the maze realm for one reason alone, and that was to collect them, refine them into pills, and raise his strength as fast as possible.

Ever since arriving in this world, everything that Jiang Chen had run into had reinforced the notion that it was important to raise his strength as quickly as possible.

If he hadn't been limited in his abilities due to the current level of his strength, he wouldn't have had to keep his head down when handling so many matters previously and wouldn't have had to leverage the influence of others.

Going from first level spirit realm to second level was a process of accumulation, a transformation of quality over quantity.

Jiang Chen gravely approached the matter of categorizing his gains from the maze realm over the next seven days, extracting out their essences, refining and absorbing them into his spirit ocean.

Absorption, refinement, tempering his spirit ocean, and then assimilating them into his spirit ocean.

Jiang Chen finally welcomed a new breakthrough on the seventh day after repeating this cycle over and over again.

He had taken another step forward in the spirit realm after breaking through the gate of the second level.

After his ascension, Jiang Chen's spirits were greatly restored. Much of the impurities within his body were evaporated and expelled from his body through the tempering of his spirit ocean.

His physical body was now much closer to perfection after the reforging from his spirit ocean.

One had to admit that the spirit ocean reshaped a person in all areas.

The difference between Jiang Chen's current demeanor to what he projected when he was beaten to death by Eastern Lu was night and day. He was as if a new person.

His features seemed more well defined, more handsomely shaped, and he had a more dashing air.

His entire bearing had been greatly elevated as well. He did not look like someone who'd originated from a small place like the Eastern Kingdom, and there were none amongst the younger generation in the entire Skylareland Kingdom who could measure up to him.

Of course, he didn't really care about these changes.

What Jiang Chen was more concerned about right now was raising his strength.

After breaking through to the second level, he deployed the Lotus again and discovered to his delight that he could manipulate four vines!

"To think that a small increase in training has led to double the number of Lotuses I can command. It's also completely effortless to manipulate them now. It looks like the level of one's training really does determine everything!" Jiang Chen thought with great emotion.

With the advent of breaking through to the second level, Jiang Chen's training also improved in all areas.

The "God's Eye" and "Ear of the Zephyr" all successfully broke through to the tenth level.

"Boulder's Heart" rose from the fifth to the sixth, and there were signs that it would continue to advance.

Although it was difficult to improve upon "Psychic's Head", it too broke to the fourth level.

Jiang Chen had been unable to practice the "Vast Ocean Current Splitter", "Divine Aeons Fist", "Moonshatter Flying Daggers" within the secret room, but had new comprehensions after meditating on them.

He'd be able to obtain new breakthroughs the subsequent times he used them in battle.

He had profited handsomely all around, and Jiang Chen emerged from closed door cultivation with delight after seven days.

The situation in the outside world was calmer than what he'd thought it be.

The aftershock of Yang Zhao's fall was slowly fading after seven days. The Dragonteeth Guard was slowly returning to normal after a large shake up.

It had been Crown Prince Ye Rong who'd benefited the most this time.

With Yang Zhao's downfall, those courtiers and officials who'd wanted to see Ye Rong be made a laughingstock all finally acknowledged Ye Rong deep within their hearts.

Some of them even put aside their face and started interacting with Ye Rong publicly, openly accepting him.

Therefore, it could be said that Ye Rong's position had finally been consolidated.

That wasn't his biggest gain as everyone now knew that his right hand man was Jiang Chen, and the latter's backer was Ye Chonglou.

This mean that the Crown Prince's true backer was also Ye Chonglou.

The undercurrent of effects from this meant that those powers who'd originally looked down on Ye Rong were forced to compromise, adjust their strategies, and give up all thought of taking down the Crown Prince.

Chapter 240: A Brand New Old Man Fei

There was also another emerging from closed door cultivation apart from Jiang Chen, and that was Eastern Gouyu.

This girl who had given up the identity of being an Eastern Kingdom princess had gone through great effort and finally absorbed the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill after three months, smashing through the shackles of the true qi realm, breaking through to the spirit realm, and truly becoming a spirit qi practitioner!

After breaking through, Gouyu's entire demeanor had also undergone a drastic change.

Her competitive spirit that had originally been written all over her twenty two year old face was now supplemented with a few traces of cool poise.

"Gouyu greets the young master." Gouyu's clear voice rang out like a piece of jade.

"Hahaha, congratulations, congratulations. Gouyu, you've finally broken through to the spirit realm and become a new legend for your Eastern clan!"

It was likely that a twenty two year old breaking through to the spirit realm had never appeared before in the history of the Eastern clan.

To this day, Jiang Chen still hadn't caught sight of the revered patriarch of the Eastern clan. As such, he didn't know what level in the spirit realm his training was.

However, Jiang Chen had no interest in this matter. He held no good feelings towards the men of the Eastern clan.

Eastern Lu was irresolute and hesitant, heartless and lacking in loyalty.

The old grandfather had said he was in closed door cultivation, but not even a peep had been seen from him when his family clan had sunk into dire straits.

Therefore, Jiang Chen wasn't the slightest bit favorably inclined towards the men of the Eastern clan.

However, it was a different case entirely with the Eastern clan women.

Gouyu was headstrong and true; Zhiruo was innocent and kind.

And now that Gouyu had broken through to the spirit realm, Jiang Chen was truly happy for Gouyu from the bottom of his heart.

Gouyu was quietly delighted to hear Jiang Chen's compliments. She had worked so hard and let go of the glories of being a princess to follow Jiang Chen. This was in order to pursue the boundless martial dao on one hand, but also to demonstrate her abilities in front of Jiang Chen and win his acceptance.

Although she already knew that Jiang Chen would never have any mundane love for her in this life, Gouyu still followed the man she had set her sights on without a murmur of complaint or regret. Her efforts in this life would be justified if she received but a word of acceptance or compliment from Jiang Chen.

"Young master, Gouyu cares not at all for some legend of the Eastern clan. I, Gouyu, am now the young master's follower. All mundane and ordinary matters are as though the floating clouds to me."

Gouyu's attitude was serious. Her mental state has risen by quite a bit after breaking through to the spirit realm.

She'd realized that pursuing the boundless martial dao was the truest desire within her heart. What had she gained for toiling away on behalf of the Eastern clan for twenty years?

Even the patriarch of the Eastern clan hadn't shown himself when the clan needed him.

She was a girl, was she to fight to the death for so-called royal gains and so-called family honor?

She had done all that she could and couldn't do.

Now, it was time to bid farewell to the matters and relationships of the mundane world.

If she had to identify any mundane ties that she still cared about, that would be Eastern Zhiruo, the little niece she had doted upon since young.

Jiang Chen somewhat understood Gouyu's thoughts.

Taking a look around, he was greatly satisfied when he saw that Xue Tong had fully recovered and that all the other personal guards were in fine spirits.

He was about to respond when an underling reported that Qiao Baishi was requesting an audience.

Jiang Chen knew that Qiao Baishi still hadn't thoroughly handled his future mother-in-law when he saw the latter's dejected expression.

"Baishi ah, it looks like you haven't gotten a handle on your future mother-in-law yet?"

Qiao Baishi smiled wryly, "That old woman isn't responsive to anything and has hardened her heart to marry her daughter off to some genius in the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, muttering something about a marriage between equal social status ranks."

Jiang Chen started. "Equal social status ranks? What do you mean?"

"Ai, the old woman disdains that I'm from a small place like the Eastern Kingdom and am unsuited for Qingyan."

Qingyan was Elder Ning's name.

"This is to say that you haven't told her our relationship?"

"I told Qingyan that you and I are friends. However, the old woman doesn't seem to acknowledge the relationship between friends." Qiao Baishi was still quite cautious. He didn't dare reveal their master and disciple relationship without Jiang Chen's nod.

Although Jiang Chen had told him to act as he would last time to the fullest extent of his abilities, he still hadn't been able to thoroughly handle the head of the Southern Palace without Jiang Chen's personal backing.

"This is to say that it's not just the old woman objecting, but you also have a love rival?" Jiang Chen smiled.

Qiao Baishi puffed out his chest, "I'm not afraid of love rivals. Qingyan has no interest in that so-called genius from the Northern Palace. She likes me."

Jiang Chen didn't doubt this. Qiao Baishi was quite smart and had a silver tongue. He'd have absolutely no problem at all in handling a woman who liked to be pretty like Elder Ning.

Not to mention that there was a heaven defying pill like the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill!

"Young master Chen, the problem is that the old woman has already publicly voiced her desire to hold a competition to select a groom, which is set for tomorrow. Once this competition is held, it will be easy for things to become set in stone. I'm worried that the old woman is predisposed towards that so-called genius, leaving me on a passive footing."

"Tomorrow?" Jiang Chen started. "That fast?"

"Indeed young master Chen! So Baishi can only put on a thick skin and ask the young master for help."

Jiang Chen chuckled. Qiao Baishi was one of his first loyal men. He'd even been the one to send Baishi to the Southern Palace.

Now that he and an elder of the Southern Palace had fallen in love, there was no reason for Jiang Chen not to give him a hand.

“Don’t worry, I’ll take care of this matter for you.” Jiang Chen clapped Baishi’s shoulder. “Just wait to take the beauty home!”

Jiang Chen could handle even Ye Chonglou, he didn’t think there was much difficulty in handling a mere head of the Southern Palace, even if the old woman was going through menopause.

The obstacles of marriage were just those having to do with positions of power and money.

Add to that the fact that Qiao Baishi and Elder Ning truly loved each other, things would be even easier then.

After sending off Qiao Baishi, another infrequent visitor arrived at the Jiang manor — old man Fei Xuan from the Qingyang Valley!

Ever since Jiang Chen had refined the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill last time, old man Fei had thoroughly vanished.

Jiang Chen had tried to find him through a variety of ways in the meantime but had failed to get in contact with him. Jiang Chen had almost suspected that this roguish old man had disappeared without a trace after receiving the Renewal Purity Pill.

But the old man had reappeared again after disappearing for a few months.

Old man Fei was wearing a uniformed outfit today, a long robe of interweaving black and green with a tree embroidered at the chest of his robe.

“Old man Fei, you’re still alive?” Jiang Chen felt a surge of irritation in his heart when he saw old man Fei.

“Heh heh, don’t be angry young master!” As usual, old man Fei was boisterous and appeared completely without principles. He walked in front of Jiang Chen and massaged Jiang Chen in a fawning manner.

“Young master, I was a bit out of line this time, but you must understand. I wasn’t just playing around, but fighting for my personal future!”

Looking at old man Fei’s joyful beam and complete lack of earlier depression, Jiang Chen was rather curious, “Old Fei, judging from your high and vigorous spirits, did you take a wife or something?”

Old man Fei chuckled, “Taking a wife is something that will happen sooner or later. I damned well swear that I’m going to take eight or ten wives after a short while and thoroughly enjoy life.”

“Tsk tsk, you look rather happy. What’s with the clothes? Are you purposefully here to show off?” Jiang Chen pointed at Old Fei’s clothes in question.

“Young master Chen, you’re right! I, Old Fei, am not just the master of Qingyang Valley now, but also have a senior executive position within the Precious Tree Sect! My position is second to that only of an elder-in-waiting!”

A thick sense of pride was in Old Fei’s tone as his brows and eyes danced, charged with boundless enthusiasm. He was like a child with lots of candy in hand, showing off for his friends.

Old man Fei chortled as he stood before Jiang Chen, "Of course, more than half the credit for my accomplishments of today goes to the young master. I completely utilized the Renewal Purity Pill this time to improve myself. My senior executive position goes straight to the head of the sect and was personally vested by the head of the sect!"

No wonder old man Fei was all smiles. It turns out that his dearest wish of many years to return to the sect had finally materialized!

Old man Fei suddenly fell to his knees in front of Jiang Chen and sobbed, "Young master, I, old Fei, am not someone who does not know good from bad. If it wasn't for you, I likely wouldn't have the chance to return to the sect in this lifetime, much less than become a senior executive. When you comforted me and said that I would have the opportunity to return to the sect in grand style one day, I never thought that this day would arrive so quickly! Young master, you've given me new life!"

Old man Fei kowtowed heavily a few times.

His gratitude towards Jiang Chen was genuine and from the heart. He'd finally been released from dozens of years of yearning and dozens of years of striving. All had finally come true, and it had all been thanks to Jiang Chen. How would he not feel indebted towards Jiang Chen?

"Old man Fei, so you've a conscience after all. Alright, I have a matter here that you can actually help with as a senior executive of the Precious Tree Sect."

"What is it? Please speak freely, young master. As long as you don't want me to betray the sect, I won't even crease my brow if the young master wants me to go into boiling water and walk through fire."

"Mm, I like this kind of attitude." Jiang Chen smiled. "I don't want you to betray the sect, I only want you to be a matchmaker."

"Matchmaker?" Old man Fei started.

"You know my man Qiao Baishi. He's with Elder Ning of the Southern Palace but is running into opposition from Elder Ning's mother. You can do something about this, right?"

Fei Xuan laughed. "Just this? Don't worry young master, although no one yet knows of my status as a senior executive, the medallion of a senior executive isn't just for show! A mere elder of the Southern Palace? Harumph! That a friend of mine finds her daughter worthy is thanks the blessings of her ancestors!"

Old man Fei's tone was completely different now that he was a senior executive.

However, he was still quite honest in front of Jiang Chen and smiled, "Young master, in front of you, I'm always your most loyal follower, Old Fei. Heh heh."

This old man was crafty and shrewd. He knew better than anyone that this young master wasn't simple. He'd tasted such sweetness after acknowledging Jiang Chen as his young master, if he kept close to Jiang Chen's footsteps in the future, then perhaps there'd be more good matters awaiting him in the future!

With old man Fei's intelligence, how would he not understand this? Therefore, even though he was a senior executive, he still kept a humble profile in front of Jiang Chen.

He didn't feel the slightest bit of conflict when Jiang Chen told him to do something, but felt rather honored, hoping that there would be many more of these chances to narrow the mental gap between him and Jiang Chen, in the end, truly becoming his confidante.